

# Before voting in the Election, read

# VOTE LABOUR?

# WHY?

## BY 'LICINIUS'

Being observations addressed to

A WORKER
A JOB-HUNTER
A TRADE UNIONIST
A LIBERAL
A BUSINESS MAN
A FARMER
A FARM WORKER
A MANAGER
AN AMBITIOUS MAN
A SERVICE MAN
A DEMOCRAT
A FREEDOM-LOVER
A PATRIOT
A WAR VICTIM
AN IDEALIST
A CHRISTIAN
A COUNTRY-LOVER
A RETIRED PERSON
A PRACTICAL MAN
A CITIZEN

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# VOTE LABOUR? WHY?

by
LICINIUS

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I

# I AM A WORKER

*I AM A WORKER, a plain, ordinary man who does a useful job and takes a pride in it. I have often heard you Socialists argue that the workers ought to unite and push the Capitalists out. I really do not see how this can be done, though I am all for anything that will give me a bigger share of the wealth I help to produce. Is not the Capitalist the man who pushes round and finds me a job, and lends me the tools to do it? How can I suddenly tell him where he gets off, and do without him?*

Well, the millionaire and his agents will try all they know to convince you that Capital is a necessary partner with Labour in the production of wealth. That plea is 95 per cent. bunk! Get this simple principle fixed in your mind: the capitalist is *mainly* a parasite who sucks out your life-blood.

A worker is not just a hefty chap in corduroy trousers, with his lunch in a red handkerchief. He is not just the man who comes home with grease under his finger-nails. These are examples of very important workers, but anyone who makes or does anything useful is a worker. The workers include the man who digs a hole in the road, and the housewife, and the fitter, and the surgeon, and even the oculist, though he never gets his hands dirty. A novelist, and even a spring poet, is a worker, for sensible folk want something to read. Above all, the man who thinks of a bright new idea, and gets folk organized to do it, is perhaps the most essential worker of all. There is a 99·99 per cent. chance that YOU are a worker, for practically everybody in the country is forced to be one, and most want to be. The workers have made all the wealth that exists in the world, and they have a moral right to share it all. At the present time, some are rightly paid more, and some less, according to their jobs, but the biggest incomes of all go to those who do nothing! This is the racket we Socialists are out to smash.

A thousand wireless talks on social and economic matters make the basic assumption that the partners in industry are Capital and Labour. We repeat: that assumption is 95 per cent. bunk. The real partners in industry are *management* and Labour. Industry is a partnership between different sorts of workers;

between those who think out ways of doing things and those who actually take off their coats and do them. The Capitalist *as such* is no more a partner than was the Old Man of the Sea to Sindbad the Sailor. He is no more a partner than is a barnacle a partner with the captain and the cabin-boy in sailing a ship. The Capitalist is a man who keeps a toll-house and says: "This land, this pit, this works, is *mine*. Before you can go in and sweat and toil to earn yourself a living you have got to pay my toll. If you do not, you cannot go in, and so you cannot work. Then you will find you cannot eat, and that will bring you to your senses. Meanwhile, I sit here in the shade."

This truth is often concealed from the plain man because the individual who holds capital in industry frequently supplies some of the management too. If the business is a very small one, he may supply labour as well. Here are folk who are both Capitalists and Workers. They use their possession of property to grant themselves a good job, but it must be admitted that they do a job. Their presence in society provides the smoke-screen which masks the activity of the blood-sucking millionaires, i.e. the "Capitalists" proper. The millionaire may be an active director of a number of concerns. He may work hard at an important job of management, and rightly receive a substantial reward. This helps people to forget that *most* of his wealth comes from his toll-house. It comes from the mere possession of property, the same property which gives him the right to hold all those important posts.

Why do we admit that the plea that Capital is a partner with the workers is *only* 95 per cent. bunk? Because saving is (or was) a useful form of work. General Goering preferred guns before butter. The Russians preferred the Dnieper Dam and tractors before butter. In any society some mechanism is necessary to persuade folk to do without part of their present enjoyment so as to provide materials and labour to make more industrial plant for use in the future. In the old-fashioned unplanned Capitalist society the only way to do this was to pay folk to save by giving them interest. The thrifty soul was encouraged to do without something he would like this year by the hope that he would have a bigger income to spend in every future year. So money has always been provided in the past for more houses, more roads, more factories, etc. "Saving" was thus a necessary and useful occupation: a reward (i.e. interest, dividends, rent) was socially wise and morally right.

"Yes," says the millionaire, "and that is *my* right to my toll-house!" We say NO!! It is sheer insolence for the millionaire to

suggest that his millions of capital are what he might have "blued" on wine, women, and song had he not been a virtuous and saving soul, with his eye fixed upon the public good. A pearl forms around a tiny grain of sand which has floated among the tender tissues of the oyster. This is the nucleus of the pearl, but the pearl itself is that which has been secreted by the oyster around the sand. So with the fortune of the millionaire: deep down in the centre there may be a tiny nucleus of real, useful savings. This is what has started the growth of the estate. The fortune as it actually is, the vast bulk of it, is that which has been built up around this nucleus by extortion. In seventeen hundred and something a noble lord sold a piece of land to the City Fathers of Liverpool for £2,500. His descendant recently pointed out that that land was now worth £12,000,000, the valued property of the citizens of Liverpool. This is as it should be, for the difference between the two values has been earned by the people of the city in the course of two centuries. They have increased in numbers and in commerce. Competition for shops, offices, warehouses right in the centre of the city has driven up the value of the land. Everyone who has lived, and traded, and earned, and spent in Liverpool has helped to do it. When by good fortune the land belongs to the public we hear of it, but exactly the same thing has happened to privately-owned land adjoining, and then nothing is said. The owner has quietly pocketed that which has been earned by the workers with brain and hand. This has happened in varying degree to all our land, in town and country alike. The same thing is true of industrial capital. The first money put up for a business represented savings out of hard-won earnings. Then the business did well, and dividends were good. A £1 share rose in price to £2, so it was divided into two £1 shares. No one had "saved" anything, but there was now twice the capital upon which to pay dividends, yet this did not prevent further division of shares, and bonuses, and other devices whereby the capital of the company was further watered. Thus, as Sir William Beveridge records in his Report, the only hard cash that was ever put into one of our great insurance companies amounted to £5,839. The so-called "capital" now runs into tens of millions, with £800,000 a year paid in dividends! Such is the pearl of great price which has formed around a very tiny grain of sand. This has happened everywhere, yet the millionaires do not blush when they talk about their swag as though it represented the constructive savings of prudent and useful citizens. This is the way in which the Capitalist "co-operates" with

Labour in the production of the nation's wealth! He sits at his toll-house, and holds out his cap as you go in to work.

Here is seen the rough justice of Socialist policy. A Socialist government would compulsorily buy out at a fair price the capital of the great industrial and financial combines. This would transfer to the State the *power* of the millionaires, and make the elected Parliament master in its own house without robbing any poor widow of a penny of her savings. Then a Socialist government would levy high taxation on the larger unearned incomes, so as to redistribute the national *income*. This again would not hit those who had put their life savings into industrial concerns. They would go on paying their fair and modest share of taxation. Finally, a Socialist government would persevere with steep inheritance taxes on large estates, so as to *dissolve them away* with the passage of years. What would remain permanently in the hands of the former shareholders as a "nest-egg" would more or less represent the nucleus of real savings, while what has been squeezed from the public would be squeezed back again. This process of "painless extraction" would be alike more moral and civilized, and more efficient, than "expropriation" and the gutters running with blood. That the return squeeze would be moderate on the small estate and ruthless on the large reflects the general circumstance that the property of a man with a little capital mainly represents genuine and useful savings out of earned income, while the property of the millionaire mainly represents his toll.

All the wealth in the world has been created by the workers with brain and arm. It must all be divided among them. Socialism stands first and foremost for this simple justice. However, we Socialists recognize that in the old order saving was the only mechanism for an essential activity in any economic system—namely, laying by from present income for future construction. Furthermore, "going without things" to-day for the sake of future good is within limits "good for people." It may be a lesson in citizenship, teaching responsibility and self-control, and serving as an object-lesson of the human effort needed to build up a civilization. For these two reasons a Socialist State will allow "small savings," and interest upon them. It is "Capital" with the big C, the man whose wealth gives him the control of finance and industry, and turns him into our master and possessor, who is to be reduced to political impotence and a small pension; reduced as humanely as possible, but above all, remorselessly.

The man who pushes round and makes jobs for his fellows

is not the Capitalist, but the genius with a bright idea, the chap with drive and a flair for organization, the technician, i.e. the *manager*. He is the *worker* the other workers cannot do without. There is no trouble at all about telling the millionaire where he gets off. *Therefore, let every worker vote for Socialism, and for the end of the parasites.*

II

## I AM LOOKING FOR A JOB

*I AM LOOKING FOR A JOB—when my present one finishes, I mean. We are busy enough now, in all conscience, and have been since war broke out. Before that, however, I was often on short time. My old Dad was out of work for years, and it broke his heart, but he was busy enough during the last war. I feel in my bones that this sorry business is going to happen again: busy in wartime, on the scrap-heap in peace. I can see myself hanging on to my job by the skin of my teeth in a year or two, and in a year or two more on the dole. I hear of all sorts of grand promises of "full employment" after the war, but I do not trust them. They are only meant to catch my vote. These promises are made by the old gang, and I cannot see them doing any better than in the past. There will be a boom while war damage is being made good, and then a slump. What have you Socialists to offer a chap like me, who has a wife and family, and who must think of ten and twenty years ahead? This is* the *practical problem that faces the country.*

We have seen enough of the tragic paradox of scarcity in the midst of plenty: folk so poor that they have to go without the things they need, yet standing idle, despite the fact that they could make them. Society as organized by the millionaires is normally in this condition in years of peace. Only a thorough-going Socialist transformation of the whole order can work a proper cure for the tragic paradox. Every other programme only amounts to tinkering things up.

Many well-meaning men who are not Socialists are busy putting forward high-sounding schemes for mending the present system. Some of these schemes are certainly better than nothing. They may serve as temporary stop-gaps. They may prevent the Ship of State from being overset by a passing squall, or at least provide a raft to rescue a few of the survivors. However, nothing

but Socialism can provide a sea-worthy craft that can ride every storm of depression in safety. Capitalism fortified with good intentions about "expansionist economy" may be better than Capitalism in its cruel rigours of "balanced budgets" and "economy drives," but its "full employment" will always be like a tight-rope walker who takes your breath away as he balances his way along over the void. Efforts to tinker up Capitalism can never do more than provide an unstable equilibrium: and this is not the decent and care-free world that all sensible men want. Under Capitalism *at its best* the people will never be free from anxiety lest men forget the lessons of the past, and so give the hard-faced men their chance to try again to put the world back on to the means test. Socialism is the *only* way to secure, permanent, and care-free full employment.

The tragic paradox of cotton-mills standing idle, with the workers walking the streets, and their harassed wives busy at home patching shirts that should have been in the rag-bag long ago, is due to the tendency of capitalist society to *save too much.* The money which ought to be spent on new shirts is being hoarded up to provide new cotton-mills which nobody wants. The result is that the old mills stand idle, and so the new ones are never built. Thus the men who make spinning machinery are out of work as well as the men who use it. They join the company of those who cannot afford new shirts, and so trade gets still worse. This happens in every industry. This is the simple cause of a depression. The main reason why so many folk do not see through the crazy system is that they find it hard to take seriously the proposition that the weakness of the present order is a *tendency to save too much.* After all, most of them find it so hard to save anything themselves, and they naturally judge national economy by their own.

The mystery of saving too much in a world where most people find it hard to save enough is explained by two main factors:

(i) A substantial proportion of the whole national income goes to a few thousand folk who are so wealthy that they genuinely find it hard to spend enough of their money. Even if they have a Rolls Royce, and a steam yacht, and a villa at Cannes, and a deer-forest in the Highlands, they cannot spend it all. Even if they keep race-horses they find they save, despite themselves! Only when "crippling wartime taxation" makes the millionaire have to content himself with a few paltry thousands a year is his difficulty temporarily solved. All this that the wealthy save they naturally wish to invest. They will not spend their savings on new industrial plant or national assets unless they are

reasonably sure of their tribute of interest. If they look out to sea and observe a cloud of depression the size of a man's hand, they say: "We will wait till prospects are better." So the millionaires withdraw money from circulation, and thereby cause the cloud they fear to darken into a storm. Then the business man sagely wags his head and says: "I told you so! How wise I was to be advised by the City. If I had invested my money in that concern, my shares would now be going down."

(ii) The prudent citizen with reason fears the proverbial "rainy day." Over every little home in the land hangs the cloud of anxiety: "I must give my children a chance; I must make provision for times of illness; I must think of old age." Therefore John Citizen pinches and scrapes week by week (or, if he is a bit better off, half-year by half-year) to pay into all manner of clubs and insurance policies. The insurance companies behave with their reserves as do the millionaires with their savings, only more so. They feel they have to withdraw it from circulation unless they can find opportunity for "safe" investment: after all, the money is not their own, and they cannot afford to take speculative risks with it.

Thus the young man brings home his bride. Promptly and properly, he insures his life, lest he leave her a widow. If he did not, he would rightly be condemned as a thoughtless spendthrift. The net result of self-denial of many a little luxury is to help put his neighbour out of a job! Every right-thinking man in the street is doing the same: assisting in turn to put *him* out. Fear drives men to *save* when the national interest demands that they *spend*. The only release from the vicious circle comes if war breaks out. Then the more "little luxuries" one can do without the better, so as to "lend to defend the right to be free." Thus in society as organized the millionaires' private prudence and public duty can only be reconciled when men give themselves to bloodshed and destruction. As soon as they return to build themselves homes, private prudence and public duty pull in the opposite direction. Such are the benefits of Capitalism!

What, then, can be done to tinker up the present order; to mend and not to end it? You *must* understand this problem if you are to be a sensible citizen in the post-war world, for the merchants of economic hocus-pocus will be ever so busy with a thousand intricate and scientific-sounding schemes for making the best of both worlds.

One thing that the Government might do would be to make gruelling taxation for the very rich permanent. This would remove the occasion for their over-saving. The money raised

would be spent on social security, so as to encourage the workers to spend all their wages week by week. At the same time, taxation would be removed from the things bought by the man in the street, so as to cheapen them and make his money buy more goods. Everything the factories could produce would then be consumed, and there would be jobs for all. We have not so far heard any Tory spokesman suggest this remedy!

A more popular notion is for the Government to persuade the millionaires and financial corporations to release their savings by pledging government security, i.e. if private investment falls off, let the State borrow the money on gilt-edged security, and spend it on housing, public works, or even on "dole." This will provide the people with money to spend, and lift society out of the trough of depression. This is the magic charm of "deficit budgeting": the "pump-priming" of President Roosevelt's New Deal. What did the Tories say about "deficit budgeting" last time? Their cry then was: "sound finance"; "preserve Britain's reputation for business integrity, even if it means tighter belts (for the workers)"; "keep the pound on gold"; "those wicked Socialists have an eye on your Savings Bank account." It seemed very shocking that the Unemployment Fund was getting into debt: though the City magnates quite forgot that the more the dole was reduced the deeper the depression would be. The Tories *may* have learned something by bitter experience. They may be scared to death, and be genuinely prepared to offer more this time, rather than lose a General Election. However, they do not seem much to enjoy *this* method of providing full employment as it goes on at the moment. "See how the Government pours out our money!" they dismally mutter. "What a grim time there will be when the nation has to face the debt now piling up!"

In fact, to produce "full employment" out of modern capitalism in time of peace as well as in time of war means "wartime extravagance" in peace also, going on for ever and ever till time is no more. "Never has so much (£ *s. d.*) been owed by so many to so few. Let it roll on therefore. Let us owe more and more to fewer and fewer." A Tory government *might* argue like this, but then again, it might not, and the future of your job depends on the answer. When once the people had forgotten, and things had "settled down," it might prefer a good old-fashioned economy drive, and put the nation on the means test for the sake of the dividends.

So much value, then, is there in the present compromise Government's compromise proposals for "full employment."

They are better than nothing, and that is all. The *sensible* way to jobs for all, the easy way, the simple way, the secure way, the obvious way, is to jump right outside the out-of-date economic taboos of capitalism, and to try the Socialist way. Would the country be better if some new factory were built and equipped, some land drained, some slum cleared, some new school, municipal opera house, or even cathedral founded? Then *cease for ever to ask*: "Will money put into this earn an adequate dividend?" Ask rather: "Is this what we really want? Is it what we want first, in light of other needs? Have we the men, the skill, the materials, to do it? Then let us start." Just as one organ of the Socialist State would provide the materials, so another would provide the credit, i.e. the money. "But supposing the enterprise be uneconomic: who is to pay the price?" If some new construction decided upon by a Socialist society as wise and necessary was "uneconomic," i.e. it added to the people's culture or amenities, but not to their store of goods, the price would have to be paid by society. Labour which might have reduced the time to get from London to Edinburgh, or increased the variety of the nation's wardrobe, had instead been devoted to the pursuit of learning or the glory of God. Because there was a little more of the one, there was bound to be a little less of the other. A Socialist society would have to use its intelligence to decide "priorities," its aim being not the very maximum possible of material luxury, and nothing beside, but the wherewithal for a decent and balanced life.

This is the Socialist plan to keep everyone happily occupied all his days, and everything busy with useful activity. If you vote Socialist, and carry the day, you will never be on the scrap-heap. Until then, you are never safe.

III

## I AM A TRADE UNIONIST

*I AM A TRADE UNIONIST. I have always been a staunch member of our Union, and have paid up loyally. I am all for increasing our membership to 100 per cent., and for building up the prestige of our leaders. I know that to hang together like this is the only way to be strong enough to strike an equal bargain with the boss. It is the only way to better wages and fair conditions. I believe in this sort of politics, but I don't hold with a lot of the "political" chaps in our Union. I agree*

*that it is right that the Union should be affiliated to the Labour Party, and I will always vote Labour, for it is a good thing for organized Labour to have a voice in Parliament. At the same time, high-flown theories about rebuilding our civilization leave me cold. I have no patience with these folk whose whole enthusiasm is for a lot of "isms." Schemes for transforming society are all very well, but are they practicable? Grand talk about a brave new world where every man shall work for the good of his fellows, where the scramble for better jobs and bigger profits shall give way to public spirit, and where the nations shall be joined in brotherhood, is very beautiful, but what will go down with the men in our shop is action that will be reflected in the wage packet and the rent-book. My mates are plain men who have to live, not a college of professors. Trade Unions? Yes! Vote Labour? Yes! Socialism? No!*

Our answer to you is plain. You want the end without the means necessary to the end. Socialism is not a theory. It is the only way to those better wages and fair conditions that organized Labour rightly demands. Labour politics without Socialism is a muddle-headed and short-sighted policy, which can only end in killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The flinty-hearted economists of the bad old order argued like this. Everything has its price, fixed by the law of supply and demand. The longer the queue and the fatter the purse, the higher the proper price. Labour is a commodity like everything else, with a price governed by the same law. If business is bad and prices of goods drop, production will be unprofitable, and producers will put men off. When they are starving they will be willing to come back to the job for a lower wage, and production will be profitable again, even at the lower prices. Thus everything adjusts itself, and unemployment vanishes: *but not quite.* There will always be some, the incapable, the disabled, the aged, who are out of work. This is doubtless hard on them personally, but these unfortunates have their use. Fear of being pushed down into "the submerged tenth" is the lash that keeps the nine-tenths at work at an "economic" rate of wages. If Trade Unionists combine to get a better rate of wages, and to enforce conditions of work that protect the less able, they are pushing the price of labour above its natural level. This makes business unprofitable whenever prices tend to fall, and causes a slump, and unemployment. Tory economists do not argue like this to-day if the man in the street is within earshot, particularly if an election is in the offing. They dare not! They know in their hearts that the economics of their system is so indecent and

inhuman that it will not stand the light of day. *But this is what they think.*

The brutal fact is that the old-fashioned cruel economists, who are too plain-spoken for Tory propaganda to-day, were quite right—if industry is carried on according to the old-fashioned rules. Within the present capitalist order, Trade Union activity that pushes up the rate for the job will increase the price of goods, without necessarily providing more money to pay for them. This may lead to a fall in demand. Thus better wages for bricklayers may mean fewer houses built, because so many folk cannot afford the new house they would like. In the same way, better conditions in this country may kill our export trade, which has to face competition with the labour of poorer and less advanced lands. The limit is bound to be reached some time. If you can only work when it pays a capitalist to employ you, then the more successful you are in improving conditions, the more certain you make the day when it will be unprofitable to employ you! Then comes the day when industry is in a tight corner. There are "cuts," and strikes to resist the "cuts." The strikes are bound to be unsuccessful, for there is not the money in the capitalist economy to pay the better rate, but the resultant dislocation spreads depression and unemployment. Finally, there is an "economy drive": the social services must be reduced so that taxation on dividends may be lightened, with the aim of ensuring that the capitalists still get their dividends despite the hard times. The unemployed are put back on the "means test," i.e. the boss is trying to get back that lash to his whip. The *real* objection to the dole is not that it is a charge on the Exchequer, but that it helps to keep up wages.

Labour politics without Socialism is thus a happy ride up a cul-de-sac. For a short time improvements in conditions for the workers are obtained, but at the expense of ultimate financial chaos. The point comes when the capitalist machine ceases to work, the country is seized with financial panic, a political scare is worked up, and the Labour administration perishes in disillusionment and contempt. This surely is the bitter lesson of recent history. There is only one thing that can make the better conditions permanent and secure; to abolish the man who says, "Will it bring me a profit to employ this man at this rate?" and to substitute the question, "Is it in the general public interest that this job should be done, and that this man should have work?" We must have the whole-hog Socialist reconstruction of society if the fruit of Trade Union activity is not to rot before it can be gathered.

The great Trade Unions of this country, with their vast membership, their discipline, and their funds, are the indispensable foundation of any government that is to exist for the benefit of the workers. That is a great obvious fixed principle. That the great Trade Unions are affiliated to a political party professing Socialist principles is the biggest single factor that will bring about the Socialist State. At the same time, that the whole Trade Union movement is not one solid phalanx of convinced and ardent political Socialists is the biggest single obstacle in this country to the coming of practical Socialism. The devotees of "bread-and-butter politics" who cannot see the wood for the trees will always be a potential source of weakness to a Labour Government. If they have their way, they will run up that cul-de-sac. Therefore you, as a Trade Unionist, must be a Socialist, and persuade your mates as well. You must see to it that your Labour candidate for Parliament is not *only* a staunch Trade Unionist, but a real live intelligent and convinced Socialist *as well*. This is your great responsibility.

## IV

## I AM A LIBERAL

*I AM A LIBERAL, and am still proud so to call myself, despite the misfortunes of my party. My father always fought the Tories for the destruction of privilege, and to advance the sacred cause of human freedom. I was brought up that way, and so I remain. I join with you Socialists in lamenting the years of Tory misrule that this country has seen, with its sorry harvest of depressed areas, floggings in India, appeasement of dictators, and war. I want generous education for the people, social security, and a new and fair Britain with a prosperous countryside and clean cities. Where I do not follow you Socialists is in your extreme theories. I do not want or see the need for this tremendous economic revolution you are planning. I want to keep in society a large scope for self-reliant private enterprise, suitably controlled for the public good, of course, lest freedom and initiative be smothered in a State which has set up as universal nursemaid to every citizen from the cradle to the grave. Besides, we Liberals used to be the successful opposition to the Tories until the Labour Party butted in and made three-corner fights. I do not see why I should go over to them now.*

You Liberals are in the same boat as the non-Socialist Trade Unionist. You passionately want reform, but without the

economic means to it. Your social services and slum clearance will cut into profits. When the slump comes you will have either to abandon your reforms and "economise" or else go boldly forward to crush the financial sabotage, i.e. *become Socialist*. Why not do it now? Why not forestall the hour of peril when a reforming government is faced with an "economy ramp" worked up by the millionaires? If your nerve fails *then*, and very regretfully you join with the Tories to "keep the country solvent," you will be swept away by the flood of political reaction and unreason. You will provide the "all-party" cloak to cover the ugly deformity of a Tory majority. That is what happened before, so you have been warned!

Read the columns of the Liberal papers. Their editorials on Beveridge, on education, on housing, on India, Russia, Greece, Spain, are all admirable. Then turn over and read the notes by the City Editor. You are back in the dark ages of Victorian finance! Here you find the hocus-pocus of "free investment," i.e. the millionaire must have his share first; of "free enterprise" and "reward for initiative," i.e. every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, with the biggest rewards for the sharks and the idle rich. Liberalism stands for the *sincere will* to reform, without recognition of the *means*. It is a set of excellent but impracticable intentions. This is the thing that has dragged you down to be the third party. When the Socialist says, "To win the election we must have a united progressive front; there must be no more three-corner fights; you must come in with us," here is his moral right and practical wisdom. Patriotism and common sense alike demand that you put away your traditional and sentimental attachment to a grand old cause which is no longer relevant to present-day needs. They demand that you forget old grudges about three-corner fights and "spoiling candidates." You must rise above snobbish distinctions between "the working classes" and "villa respectability," and recognize that, whatever may have been true fifty years ago, to-day both sections have the same interest, to set up the Socialist society.

## V

## I AM A BUSINESS MAN

*I AM A BUSINESS MAN. I am the grocer at the bottom of the street, in business on my own account. I speak for all who manage their own "little businesses" (and those which are not so little)—the butcher,*

*the baker, the milkman, the bookseller, the garage proprietor, the local builder, yes, and the barber, the woman who keeps the chip shop, the chimney-sweep, and the travelling scissors-grinder. We men in business are our own masters, and proud of it. We have to pay the price of responsibility, sometimes of anxious worry, for our independence, and we are willing to pay. We are the men of initiative and ability, who are not content to plod along like so many in a paid job that leads nowhere. We are the men who stand on our own feet, and are the backbone of the nation. If you squash us out you soften the nation. That is what your fine Socialist theories mean in practice; more and bigger Co-ops. to crush us slowly to death, or at least, coupons, points, permits, controlled prices, and inspectors, in time of peace as well as in war. Socialism means higher wages for my man—a good fellow, no doubt, but quite in a rut—until he gets nearly as much as me out of the concern, while I work twice his hours and have all the worry. Socialism is a grand theory, but not for me! All I ask from the Government is that they give me fair competition with Woolworth's and the Co-op., and I am well able to look after myself, thank you! I am not interested in politics.*

So all that the business man asks of the Government is fair competition with the chain store? That is just what you have got! These vast businesses do not owe their position to any legal monopoly, or to State favouritism, but to the grand foundation principle of competitive society: "To him that hath shall be given." Set up a competition, and someone is apt to win. Then the game stops, unless there is a new deal. The multiple stores and big combines started as you are now, but they happen to be the lucky beggars who have *won* the "fair competition," so now you cannot compete.

Look round the town. Fifty years ago, chain stores were almost unknown. Now they are everywhere, and skim the cream of the business. If all you ask for is competition, for the next twenty years you will work harder and harder for less and less. You will worry yourself into your grave. In the end your son will sell the family business to the combine. In fifty years the "little man" will be left with the crumbs of business that fall from the rich man's table. If this is what you ask for, some day you will discover that you have "had it." Now don't get hot under the collar! No reflection is being cast upon your business acumen, your enterprise, or your diligence. When our men were beaten in the first Battle of France, no reflection was thereby cast on their soldierly virtue or courage. They were beaten *by the machine*. You, the small (or not so small) business

man are being beaten by the machine. Consider your favourite brand of tooth-paste. You pay the same price whether you buy it at the private chemist or at the chain store, but the chain store gets the bigger profit. The big firm can use its big order as a big stick to get that bit of extra discount from the manufacturer. It pays the manufacturer to give this consideration, so as to please a big customer that can push his goods. Besides, it is so much less trouble to handle one order for a million than a thousand orders for a thousand. And so it goes on all round. This is one of the economic dive-bombers that is beating you!

Your only security is in the public ownership of the big units, the manufacturers, the large merchants, and the multiple stores. A Socialist government will appoint public judicial bodies with technical advisers to decide what business is best handled by the big combines, and what by small individual businesses. Such a tribunal would, for example, decide that in a certain market town all the bread should be supplied by a large co-operative bakery, and that in certain villages at a distance it should be supplied by private bakers working for themselves. Each would be given his own beat, and all would have fixed fair prices and agreed conditions of labour. This is the only arrangement that will give security to the small business man. If the division of trade is done openly and in an above-board manner by a body responsible to the public, whose duty it is to weigh up the public interest and the practicability of various kinds of business organization, then and only then will the millions of voices and votes of "small men" begin to count. They will have at least a chance to defend before the public their right to exist, and to serve the public in suitable cases. If all the Government does is to hold the ring for "fair competition," then the "little men" equipped with economic small arms will, for all their superior numbers, never be able to do more than carry on guerrilla warfare against the few armed with the financial big guns.

This is not the place to go into details for every class of business. Broadly speaking, the greater the element of personal service and personal contact that goes to make up a business, the greater is the scope for the small firm in a Socialist society. The more the business depends on distributing goods, the more will it tend to be carried on by large-scale organization. So, the hairdresser will probably always continue as a private business. The small garage for minor repairs and routine servicing will hold its own alongside the large plant. Tailoring naturally divides itself: the multiple concern will give good value for the

plain man, while the "gentleman" who is prepared to pay a couple of guineas extra to be bowed in and out of the shop with smiles and "Yes, sirs" will go where he gets "the personal touch" (though a Socialist State will gradually breed fewer and fewer folk prepared to earn their living by such methods, or to desire such service). The great staple commodities will be mainly handled by the large unit. *In all this the main point is*, whenever a decision is made it will be made openly by a judicial body able to weigh interests and count votes, and not by the present jungle methods. This may seem a strange new world to the business man, but it *does* offer security to multitudes of small business men. If it be decided that it is in the public interest that a certain small firm should be taken over for public ownership and more direct public control, a Socialist society would give adequate compensation, and the offer of another job. The alternative is the *same* displacement of the small firm by the big, but by pressure of ruthless competition, and with no hope of appeal or redress. The little man will work harder and harder for less and less, and graduate through bankruptcy to heartbreak. Will you purchase illusory "freedom" at this great price? No! Then the "business man" should vote Socialist.

## VI

## I AM A FARMER

*I AM A PRACTICAL FARMER, and I have no patience with your Socialist clap-trap. My father and grandfather voted for the old Earl when he was Lord ——, and I will vote for his son. They are a grand old family, who love the land. They will defend our interests, and you know where you are with them. As for these bright young city lawyers and teachers, they know nothing about the land, and care nothing. The interest of Socialists is in the town and its ways, and they will sacrifice farming for the sake of the industrial population, just as politicians always did before the war. Socialism means running us farmers from Whitehall; it means the War Agricultural Committee for ever and ever; it means my wife sitting up at nights filling in forms when she should be in bed; it means young men from college in little cars running round to teach me my business. Socialism for farming is not a practical proposition. I do not trust your fine promises of a prosperous agriculture in a Socialist society. No, thank you, sir! The Conservatives never did*

*much for us between the wars, I agree. They are too much under the thumb of financial interests and industrial magnates. I have not much faith in any politicians, and I do not believe that any of them can prevent farming from going to the bad again, once the war boom is over. At the same time, I must hope for the best, and go on voting for Lord ——. They would be grand landlords were it not for these cursed death duties, draining away the life-blood from the land.*

As we Socialists see it, the thing you farmers have been wanting for years is guaranteed prices for your produce, pegged to wages, so as to give you a fair margin. That demand is absolutely right! That you ask for this shows that you realize that what has been wrong with farming is not so much technical as financial, not the farming but the £ *s. d.* No one would claim that all farmers are good farmers, but by and large the thing that has been wrong is not the farming, but the buying and selling. The main thing that you farmers need is shelter from the jungle law of business as organized by the millionaires and their Tory catspaws.

The reason for this financial weakness is not far to seek. It is important to realize that it is something bound up in the very nature of farming, which can never be put right while the present competitive basis of society remains. Farming is the only large-scale productive industry in this country which still keeps to the old way of a multitude of independent family businesses, where the proprietor provides capital, and management, and much of the labour. This system was once typical of urban industry also, but has now given way to multi-million combines. That farming has not gone this way is not just due to "backwardness." It is something grounded in sound technical reasons, i.e. it is a permanent factor in the industry. In farming the productive plant is not concentrated in a factory, but spread over the broad acres of England's green and pleasant land. There are a thousand local varieties and combinations of climate and soil. The decision to roll this field or not to roll, to sow the corn to-day or to wait to see what to-morrow will be like, to cut the corn this week or next, has to be made by the skilled and responsible man. The decision has to be made *on the spot* by the man who knows local conditions. It has to be made *this morning*: there is no time to refer to H.Q. All this means that in arable farming the most efficient unit is roughly the most compact that will give enough work for the economic use of such machinery as is adapted to the type of farming. Beyond this the unit becomes

harder to manage efficiently in detail, and with no compensating advantages in mass production. The advent of powerful agricultural machinery has certainly increased this best size of holding, and multitudes of British farms are far too small, but there is no shred of evidence that a farmer with 20,000 acres would be more efficient than one with 2,000. A multi-million combine farming half a county would be an impracticable monstrosity.

In keeping live-stock, the bias in favour of the moderate unit is still more marked. In fact, Nature has fixed the unit for us; a big farmer cannot have a cow as big as a whale. The cow that is one of a herd of twenty is just as efficient a producer as the cow that is one of two hundred, and it will probably be better looked after. Success with live-stock depends on an eye to notice how they are doing from day to day, i.e. a personal interest. A word from the ancient world still holds good: the shepherd cares for the sheep that are his own. Once a dairy farmer has enough cows to run a milking-machine there is no substantial advantage in increasing the scale of his operations, apart from the financial one that he is a bigger buyer and seller.

It is for this reason that the farmer is in the same boat as the small business man—but he has no hope of getting out. By the very nature of his industry, the farmer is bound to find himself as economic infantry facing the economic dive-bombers of the mammoth combine. He will remain in his old economic slit-trench for ever, unless he joins with the Socialist in disarming and taming these monsters. So long as the present system of semi-monopoly capitalism endures, the farmers will always be 10,000 little men buying machinery, fertilizers, and cattle cake on a market dominated by a handful of mammoth concerns, and 10,000 little men selling the produce on a market dominated by another handful. The effect of this is that buying is always on a seller's market, selling always on a buyer's market. To buy retail and to sell wholesale is the thing that has dragged farming down. The business of a farmer is to farm; buying and selling is in a sense a side-line. The whole business of these financial gentry is buying and selling. The first attention of a trained staff can be devoted to driving hard bargains, so, of course, the farmer can always be outsmarted. The men who never get their boots dirty soak up the bulk of the wealth that the men of the soil have laboured for. No wonder there is a cry for guaranteed prices!

What can the country gentleman M.P. do to help here? A century ago the landed proprietors were a social and economic

power in the nation. Now they are finished. There may be some of the old families who got part of their money into industry or city property, and can run their estates on the proceeds. To such, the care of the ancestral estate is a pleasant hobby, on which city money can be spent instead of on a private aeroplane or big game hunting. This sort of country gentleman knows on what side his bread is buttered. You cannot expect him to stand up for the farmer against his pals. The landed proprietors who are not so lucky, and who have only their land to live on, have been going down-hill for years. They simply have not the means to stand the racket of a slogging-match between financial interests. If prosperous landed proprietors could not defend the landed interest against Victorian industry, how can you expect broken-down landed proprietors to do it against modern centralized industry? The intentions of the country gentleman M.P. regarding agriculture may be excellent, but his power is nil. Lord —— and his like are honourable men who mean well, but in fact they only serve as a smoke-screen behind which advance the panzer divisions of the hard-faced men who sell you fertilizers and buy your corn.

The only way to a secure and prosperous future for farming is to abolish the rule of the country by the financial slogging-match. You must combine with everyone else to set up fair prices for everything, fair wages for everyone, i.e. to bring about a Socialist plan for industry. You cannot ask for guaranteed prices for yourself, and leave the town workers out, for you cannot hope to get a favoured position for yourself at the expense of the town in a country where the majority of voters live in the town. To ask for that is waste of breath: it simply will not happen! Therefore you must combine to ask for guaranteed prices for *everyone*, and you will get your share. Once the buying and selling prices of all commodities, and the wages in all occupations, are fixed by responsible committees working openly for the public good, and the reign of "squeeze" and wirepulling is brought to an end, then and *only then* will the weight of the millions of rural votes begin to count. Ask for yourself alone, and you are bound to fail. Therefore it is your true interest to vote for the Socialist plan, and to ask for all.

We Socialists would assure the farmer that Socialism does not mean farming from Whitehall, and hosts of inspectors. It means representative tribunals to fix targets for production, national wages, prices, scales of rent, etc., but within those general limits the practical man will be free to carry on his farming as he thinks best. The wartime scheme represents the uneasy com-

promise of the old way and the new. It makes the worst of both worlds. It bids men go on farming for profit, and at the same time tries to compel them to grow, not what is most profitable, but what the nation most needs. Hence there is the necessity for the detail instructions for cropping and acreage, the barrage of forms and permits, and the army of inspectors. All this is the attempt to make capitalist production function in times of abnormal scarcity, and yet to prevent too obvious profiteering. The effect is to hold out the opportunity of easy money if only you will break the law. The greenest grass is put in sight, but at the other side of the hedge, and so a policeman has to mount guard. In times of plenty the greenest grass will be on the right side of the hedge, and temptation will disappear. In a peacetime Socialist State an intelligent control of prices will secure the proper production of various items without fussing and "orders."

Finally, the farmer must take a firm look at one great bogy. Socialist national ownership of land makes his flesh creep! The main objection is that the State is not a good landlord of the land it at present owns. Now, the more State tenants there are in the State, the more power they have to secure that the State is a good landlord. The one thing that will make the nation as a whole value the land, and care for it, is that the land should be a national asset. That everyone should share in "the landed interest" is the farmer's greatest guarantee. In any case, there is the practical issue that a great deal of money needs to be spent on the land if farming is to be permanently revived, and the country made an agreeable place to live in. There is a crying need for better housing, better buildings, land drainage, reorganization of the field system, etc. All this means money. Before the war the private landlords were either unwilling or unable to find this money, and so the farmer gradually wore out what had come down from his grandfather. Can we imagine that in the future the landlords will be more willing or more able to carry out this reconstruction? If it is to be done at all, it will be done by public money, and this means that the land to be improved must be purchased by the public so that the benefit flows back into the public purse. Public opinion will never stand for giving the money as a present to the landlord. Therefore if the farmer wants to see the improvements he had better reconcile himself to State landlordship.

The background to the whole farming problem in an industrial country is that a prosperous town is the key to a prosperous countryside. If the town worker is on the means test, ½*d.* on the loaf matters everything in the world. Then the

cry of "cheap food" carries the day, and farming may go to the devil. On the other hand, if the townsfolk are not too tight for daily bread, they will for the most part be glad to feel that the prices they pay make possible fair wages for the farm worker and fair returns for the farmer. Tory economics means scarcity for the many so that the few may be sure of their dividends. Socialism means letting science get to work unhindered, so that there may be enough for all. This will bring the farmer his profitable market as a by-product. Therefore let the farmer vote Socialist.

VII

## I AM A FARM WORKER

*I AM A FARM WORKER. Because I like country life and pursuits, and open-air work, I have been fool enough to stick to work on the land, despite the miserable housing and wages. True, the wages have been a little better recently, but I am afraid that the bad old times will come back again. I do not want to see farming go down for ever, and the countryside a ruin, and all the people gone, but that is what it will come to unless you Socialists can do anything. If things stop as they are, I would never let a lad of mine take to farm work if I could possibly get him into anything else. What have you to offer us?*

You should vote Socialist, because Socialism stands for justice for the man who has had a raw deal, and the farm worker has had one of the rawest.

First, there can be no permanently better wages and conditions unless farming permanently prospers. Many a farmer said during the lean years: "I know that the wages I pay my men are miserable. I am ashamed to pay skilled men so little. At the same time, I can pay no more. They are getting more out of the farm than I am myself, for as often as not I have all the worry and make a loss on the year's working." Sometimes this has been a mere excuse for exploiting labour. Sometimes it has been stretching a point. Often there has been much truth in this plea. In the years between the war many a thoroughly efficient farmer has skated over bankruptcy on the thinnest of thin ice, and even at 35*s.* a week his man has been getting more than the boss. You can't get a quart out of a pint pot. Therefore there can be no square deal for the farm worker until farming

enjoys secure prosperity. Take a look at what we have said to the farmer, and think that over first. You will see why there can be no prosperous countryside without Socialism. What is spoken to your boss is addressed to you as well. That is the first point.

There is something to be added to this, however. Only Socialism can get you your fair share of that new plenty. In the fabled days of Victorian high farming the farmers did well for years, and the landlords grew fat, but the labourers and their families went hungry. We do not want *that* sort of prosperity again! If the Tories pour out subsidies to keep farming going under the rules of the bad old game, you can trust them to look after their own friends first. There will be steady profits for the farmer. The landlord will be sure of his rent. The Tories will get their votes in return: and the farm worker will be left with a few crumbs of benefit. You know what good friends the Tories are to the working man. The countryside needs, not only a government that is a friend to *farming*, but also one that is a friend to the *farm worker*.

Here you run into the other main reason for the agricultural workers' raw deal. To the poverty of the industry has been added lack of that unity among the workers which is the sure ground of self-defence. To organize scattered farm workers into efficient and solid Trade Unions is difficult. The agricultural Unions are not to be compared in strength and prestige with most of the industrial Unions. Therefore the skilled workers have not been able to establish their status, and collective bargaining has not been a reality. Hence the skilled man in the country has had to be content with a town labourer's wages. To the general prosperity of farming must be added encouragement of Trade Union activity. You need a government that is on the side of the workers if you are to secure that proper status and that fair share of the profits. Only a Labour and Socialist government will be your true and firm friend on this score.

Finally, you must vote Socialist because you believe in the secret ballot. We Socialists know from experience of past elections that rumours often circulate round the pub that the boss is certain to get to know in the end how you voted. Your wife may bring home a story from the Women's Institute that the folk at the big house can always pick out the Labour men for unwelcome attention. It may help the Tories to see to it that these lies are believed by folk who ought to know better, but it is up to you to brand these lies for what they are. Even if in the conditions of your village you dare not wear the Labour colours, or even go to the Labour meeting, lest presently

you lose your job or your cottage, *you dare vote* to secure your rights. The local tyrant cannot find out who did it, though he will soon find that someone has hit him. Therefore, vote Socialist!

VIII

## I AM A MANAGER

*I AM A MANAGER of a department in a big concern, and I speak for others like myself, the technical adviser, the works chemist, the accountant, the manager of the branch of the chain store, etc. We are not the proprietors of our concerns, though a good many of us have put some of our savings into our own firms. What we supply is management. We are the top rank of salaried workers, and we actually run the job. We managers are the practical men with the trained minds, the men who have improved our chances and done fairly well for ourselves. We have to satisfy the directors that the concern is efficient, that the organization is on its toes, and that the foremen and workpeople are pushing round with the job. Socialism puts ideas into folk's heads, and encourages them to question the management. Socialism makes our job more difficult. How are we to shoulder the main responsibility for running the manufacture and commerce of the country if Tom, Dick and Harry are encouraged to carry on a debate with us as to whether we know our own business? The position is impossible, for who would be the captain of a ship with a dozen pilots? It is for the staff to do as they are told, because my word goes on* my *job! I have my orders too. No Socialism for me!*

Yes, if you think of it, your work and position represent one of the most distinctive developments of modern commerce and industry—that is, the "managerial revolution." Once everything was carried on by small firms actually managed by their proprietors. As these have become more and more merged into combines and trusts the effective proprietors have become fewer and fewer and richer and richer. More and more of the real management is performed by the top rank of salaried employees. These are men with wide responsibility, and with some influence with the ultimate controllers of affairs. They are respected, men with good jobs and secure tenure, comfortable homes and some savings. Some rank as directors of the company, though they lack substantial voting power in the shareholders' meeting. In the last resort, they are all employees of the millionaires.

The emergence of this class constitutes the "managerial revolution." Socialism simply means carrying the managerial revolution to its logical conclusion. Socialism does not mean Trade-Union obstruction to your well-laid plans. It means more power for you—power to match the responsibility you already have to shoulder.

Suppose you want to install some new plant, improve the office system, market some new product, embark upon this or that piece of industrial research. Why should you have to go cap in hand to Lord ——, who knows no more about the job than the office boy, and talk him round to think that your bright new idea is really his idea, and that he is a clever fellow for having thought of it, so that you can get your way? Why, because a man was lucky in his father, should you always have to soap him down, "Yes, my lord," "No, sir," when you are the better man? When you want to make a good technical job of the output, why should you have first to convince him that the improvement will add to his unearned millions? Then afterwards you see him give the job you have worked for to some pal who wears the same old school tie, and you have to take it with a smile. This miserable system is what Capitalism, the rule of the millionaires, stands for. You are the man who manages, and you should really *manage*! This is what Socialism will do. It will tell Lord —— where he gets off!

When your concern is socialized, you will not have to take your decisions to a clique of self-appointed dictators sitting on their fathers' money-bags. Their place will be taken by a directorate of yourselves, sitting with a panel of trustees appointed by the Government, or perhaps by the municipality. The business of these trustees, responsible to the public, will be to co-ordinate your plans with the national plan, and to interpret government policy. Supposing you disagree with their interpretation of public welfare and public policy, it will be your democratic right, and your duty of citizenship, to organize your colleagues and subordinates in making appeal to your Member of Parliament, and even to agitate at the next election. No one will sack you or put you on the shelf for this, for you will not be interfering with another man's rights of property, but carrying out your public duty of leadership. You will not have everything your own way, of course, because the concern will be run according to a national plan, but you will have complete liberty to make your voice heard. Indeed, to take an active interest in major policy will be the stepping-stone to appointment as a government trustee. You have nothing to fear from this policy,

for it is the policy that will increase your influence. Instead of *receiving orders* and then *giving orders*, you will have full scope to *persuade* those with whom you work. You, the manager, are just the man who can persuade, for you are the man respected for experience and technical knowledge, accustomed by daily occupation to take the lead, to speak out, and to get things done. This is a position of public honour and dignity.

Socialism certainly does not mean sacking you to provide a job for a political adventurer, or reducing you in status to a rubber-stamp official. Your millionaire boss is not your protector, but the man who milks your brains. You realize that he cannot do without you, though now you have no effective power to put him in his proper place. In the same way, a Socialist administration could not do without you. It dare not reduce the country to chaos by sacking the managerial element wholesale, even if it were foolish enough as to want to. Therefore the coming of Socialism will enhance your power and status, provided that you are prepared to play the game by the main public plan, and so long as you treat those who work under you as men and brothers. When the great change comes you go on as before, and get into trouble only if you make trouble for yourself by sabotage. Socialism is, in fact, the logical consummation of the managerial revolution. Therefore the managerial class has everything to gain and nothing to lose by Socialism. The only one excluded from the benefit is that miserable individual who so lacks decent public spirit that he will not throw himself heart and soul into a public plan for the public good, and thereby find his own good too. You are not one of these: therefore vote Socialist.

IX

## I AM AN AMBITIOUS MAN

*I AM AN AMBITIOUS MAN. I want to get on in the world. I know from experience that I am up to my job, and if it comes to that, I can do it better than my mates. Under conditions of free competition for business, I can get to the top. I know the system is hard for old Smith, who is a good fellow, but too much of an easy-going chap. He will have to grub along in a rut, and some day see me move to a nice house in the suburbs. I feel sorry for him in a way, but I really cannot spoil my*

*chances in this hard world for the like of him. That is his concern. I know that you well-meaning Socialists want to organize a nice friendly world for the sake of those who cannot look after themselves, but if you do you block my road. The world as organized by competitive Capitalism is a hard world for those who have not sharp swords to win glittering prizes, but after all, survival of the fittest is the law of Nature and the path of progress. In the present order there is plenty of room at the top, and I mean to get to the top. Therefore I stand by the present order. Under Socialism I would have to wait for snail-pace promotion as those at the top die off. I don't want to spend my life in a queue, waiting for dead men's shoes.*

We Socialists have one plain thing to say first of all to chaps like you. If you are to fit into the coming Socialist society you have one big lesson to learn. The only proper ambition for a decent citizen who is conscious that he possesses powers, talents, and ideas above the average is that of securing the widest possible scope for using them to the public good. We set our faces against the self-seeking ambition of hard-faced men. If you are one of these, we Socialists are going to bust you, for ordinary decent folk do not stand for these ideas. It is right that the man of parts should desire public respect, and above all, scope to get other men to go his way. That is why he has been endowed with unusual gifts. Socialism will find plenty of room for the man of ambition, because he is one of the most useful of citizens if he uses his gifts aright. One of the main things that is wrong with the world is that there are so few like him, and that most people are content to be led. However, it is a maxim of Socialism that the born leader should have to *win* his place at the top, not *browbeat* his way there, and enjoy his position through the goodwill of the crowd that is content to follow. The great aim of Socialism is to set up the comradely society, and to do away with the present cruel system in which multitudes have to go through life with their human dignity outraged, having to smile and say "Yes, sir" because they dare not breathe the hate and envy that is in their hearts.

Now you say: "There is plenty of room at the top." That is a lie! Like all the most dangerous lies, it is veneered with enough truth to make it look like the solid truth, unless you take a second look. To-day the place at the top is reserved for the first-class passenger in life. The place is booked for the man who inherits his money-bags from his grandfather, who was the man who got to the top in his own day. The only other chap with a chance is

the man who was at Eton with the young boss. These financial aristocrats who inherit their position are the folk who own the shares that give the controlling votes in the big concerns that dominate our commerce and industry. If the time comes for putting one's foot down, they can squeeze the lesser directors out, and make the managers do what they want or rue the consequences. These are the men at the top. They will employ you and promote you if it is profitable to them to secure your services. They will give you responsibility, too, of a sort, i.e. they will gladly go to live in the south of France and leave you to manage the business, if that seems to be the way to increase their unearned million to two millions. But don't kid yourself about being the man at the top. The most you can hope for is to squeeze next to the top, if that serves to keep the big man firmly on his pedestal.

Now for the veneer of truth on the big lie! Someone will object: "But what about the motor industry? In our own times have not two or three won their way up from the bottom to the top?" They have done so. They have because the motor industry was an entirely new one, based upon an entirely new invention. The pioneers of the motor were not in direct competition with established concerns in the same line. This meant that the few who were in at the beginning all started more or less from scratch. Thus two or three of the ablest were given a fleeting and golden opportunity to put themselves ahead of the others, and so to make themselves into millionaires. This will not happen again in the motor trade! A poor man, however brilliant, could not set up in competition with the big concerns. Suppose he had a fine new invention, he could not put it into mass production without vast capital. If he started to manufacture in twos and threes, his model would be prohibitively expensive, and never get a chance. The most he could do would be to sell his bright idea to a big firm, and bargain for a minor directorate to develop it. He might win a house in the best suburb, but not a place with the captains of industry. If Capitalism continues for another generation, the places at the top of the motor industry will go to those who are lucky enough to be the heirs of those who have worked their way up in this generation. Then the industry will be in the same position as the railways, the mines, the insurance companies, and all the rest of the long-established financial and industrial set-up. The most that Capitalism offers to you, the ambitious man, is the chance of a pure fluke. If you happen to be in on the ground floor with an entirely new development at which nobody can

now guess, the chance of getting to the top is then not entirely denied you. With Socialism you are *certain* of a *fair chance* to show what you are worth.

## x

## I AM A SERVICE MAN

*I AM A SERVICE MAN. When I was called up I was a young fellow. I had never bothered my head with politics. What I have been through makes one think. I have seen my pals killed: is anything worth while coming out of it all? If I am lucky enough to come back, what sort of chance will be given me to make good in civilian life? That's one thing that worries me. When the glad day comes that finds me an ex-Service man, what sort of a country will be waiting for me? Will it be a glad day? Some of the men in our unit are always talking about Socialism, but I must confess I don't know much about these things. What have you Socialists to offer to me and my mates?*

The answer is plain. The thing you are hoping for is the comradely society. We Socialists are the only people who have a clear idea of how to get it.

The first thing you want is a decent chance to make good, and to make up for lost time. You have been away at the ends of the earth all these years. You naturally fear that some of your best years have flown away, that your mind may have become unsettled from normal ways, that your hand may have lost its skill. On the other hand, the man who has kept his job at home is on the spot, and in touch with things. He has the advantage in the rush for jobs. You want to feel that you will have got into step with things before the danger of a slump comes. You want a decent chance to find your feet in civvy street, so that you can look after yourself. That decent chance is the one thing that the bad old competitive society will not give you. From top to bottom, the question is: "Will it pay me to employ this man, or that?" The more you have consumed the years of youth and your health and strength and nerve in the service of the nation, the less profitable you will be to the man who asks that question. It is true that the Government will compel your former employer to take you back. That is a matter of simple justice. As a start, that is better than nothing. Yet compulsion cannot last for ever.

and in any case, who would want to stop permanently with a man who grudges employing you? Government compulsion on private employers is a temporary measure that will soon fade out. What you want is a nation that will remember with gratitude, and will be glad to give you a leg up for a year or two if necessary. Private employers in cut-throat competition with one another simply cannot afford to give you that leg up for long out of their profits, particularly if they are faced with a slump. The only society that can *remember* is the one that looks on you, and all men, as a comrade, a man and a brother, and which asks: "What is this chap worth as a man? What service has he rendered which merits the respect of society?" Competitive society is the system that leaves a man in the lurch the more he is in need. The old gang say that they will do better this time, and they probably mean it, but they stand by an economic system that makes it impossible. Therefore their assurances can never be more than good intentions. Do not trust them. The Socialist society is the society which stands by you.

We do not doubt that if you think at all you have a deeper concern than this. "*My bomb-aimer and I used to be travellers for competing firms. To please my boss and keep a roof over my wife's head, I had to steal a march on the other chap whenever I could, and he on me. This was the survival of the slickest. War may be hell, but there is one good thing that has come out of it. When we face the flak we are now pals who are in it together. There are no mock heroics, but I know that he would risk his very life for me and the rest, and I for him. Of course we would, for all depend on each. For the sake of those at home, and for honour and duty, we would all risk our lives to do our stuff. Heaven knows, every Service man longs to escape for ever from the barrack-square and the barrack-square spirit. He wants to enjoy some privacy, and to be a man with a soul of his own, and not just a number. Yet this comradely spirit is something he does not want to lose. Am I to sink back into that sickening and indecent world of every man for himself, with every man's eye on the main chance?*"

Well, the Tories may prate about honour and patriotism, and wave their flags, but their economic system will bring back the society of self-regarding men. They believe in competition as the secret of enterprise, i.e. in freedom for the boss to apply his wage-packet whip to drive you back to the survival of the slickest. That, they feel, is the way to get the most work out of a man: set him up against his pal, and put the fear of God into him. The comradely spirit you hope to find living on in the freedom of civilian life is the very spirit of Socialism. The society we aim to build is a co-operative one, the whole nation engaged

in high and clean endeavour. As a member of a disciplined national team, each will give of his best, and have the satisfaction of knowing that he is both earning his living and improving his chances, and also serving the public cause and standing by the pals who stand by him. We Socialists do not suppose that you can make all men into angels by Act of Parliament. Human nature will still be human. What we are going to do is to put a decent chap in a society that gives him a decent lead, and helps him to take a pride in his team. If you want this you must vote Socialist.

## XI

## I AM A DEMOCRAT

*I AM A DEMOCRAT. I believe in one man, one vote. I prize my vote as a privilege. I hold in honour those whose sacrifices and struggles in the past won for us our freedom of conscience, of speech, of the Press, of association, and the universal vote by secret ballot. These things are the foundations of our liberty: they need to be preserved, and I mean to do what I can to preserve them. I believe that democracy is the good and decent and moral way of government. It gives the plain man the dignity of a senator. Democracy is a practical and effective way of government. It stands the test of hard times. The unemployed did not turn into Nazi roughs here, because even when they were down and out they still believed that democratic and representative government was the true way to a square deal. Democracy stands the test of national peril. There was no defeatism in this free land in the dark days of 1940: we all stood together as one man behind our own Government. We do not fight under the handicap of the dictators, who have to keep the cream of their man-power at work conquering the home front. For all these reasons, I believe in our democratic constitution and ancient freedoms, and our method of gradual and agreed progress. You Socialists say that there can be no vital democracy without the Socialist control of finance and industry. If this is so, I am very interested, but I really do not understand this claim. Have we not had equal and secret votes for years? I believe the Conservatives and Liberals are just as wedded to parliamentary government as you are. Does not every important British political party believe in democracy?*

It is good to hear you speak like this. You have got hold of some of the most important of all political truths, and a Socialist agrees with every word you say. There is, however, something

very important that you have forgotten. In modern conditions democracy demands something in addition to representative institutions, free speech, and the secret ballot. To function properly it requires democratic control of the means by which one man can persuade his neighbours to think and feel. For free speech to be genuinely free something must be done to ensure that every section of opinion has a fair share of the means of propaganda. This is just what does not happen to-day, because the means of propaganda are vast industrial enterprises, controlled like everything else by the millionaires.

The fact is, democratic institutions do not function in a vacuum. The polling booth does not exist suspended between heaven and earth in serene detachment. It is in the same street as the factory, the shop, the home, and the cinema. The citizen cannot earn his living, eat his daily bread, take his well-deserved recreation, and go to rest, all as one man, and then step out of himself like a gorgeous butterfly out of a dirty chrysalis and fly away to the election meeting and the ballot-box. If the plain man is dominated by an evil system in the daily business of getting and spending, and in his means of relaxation and amusement, then try as he may to rid himself of the taint, he carries something of it with him when he goes to vote. This is why millions of working men and their wives so strangely go on voting for their oppressors and exploiters.

The most obvious example of this is the conduct of the Press. Printing newspapers is no longer a small personal business, infinite in variety. It is a mammoth mass-production industry, and therefore belongs largely to the millionaires. Some national and local papers are honestly and openly associated with the various political parties. So far so good, for you know where you are with them: they have some sense of responsibility. For the rest, the Press shows no such sense of responsibility. The owners do not look upon it as a vital joint in the constitutional machine, but as a business the purpose of which is to pay a dividend on capital. The method of much of the popular Press is: print whatever will help to sell most copies, then the increased circulation means better revenue from advertisers. Its maxim is: news is that which it is most profitable to print on the other side of an advertisement. The political information of such papers is not a conscientious guide to the citizen. It is a series of stunts. At times the stunt may be to slang a Tory Cabinet Minister, or a piece of Tory policy. This is their brand of impartiality. *Let a general election come round, however, and the irresponsible popular Press is certain to support the Tories.* The current stunt is then the

latest in political booby-traps, the authentic successor to "Hang the Kaiser and make Germany pay"; the Zinovieff Red Letter, and "the Ballot of Blood." The millionaires are naturally defending their own, and do not hesitate to hit below the belt. How dare we democrats tolerate this political time-bomb lying in the foundations of our Parliament, ready to blow up at the appointed hour?

The devotee of the *Daily Liar* will get very hot under the collar at this. "I do not take my politics from my paper." Thank God, that is often true! If folk *always* voted according to their papers, the millionaires would be bound to rule us for ever. So long as Capitalism endures there is bound to be a majority circulation of anti-Socialist newspapers, if one puts together the responsible political organs and the millionaire dope Press. Certainly the people are not such mugs as always to take their politics from their daily paper, but *some* of them do. The chief danger is, however, that *many more* of them are *liable* to do so at just those moments of confused crisis when clear thinking is most necessary, and when a scare is most likely to go down well with the crowd. A man may say to himself: "I take this paper for the racing news, or the comic strip, or because it has such good murders, or to light the fire with; politics is quite another matter." *That man is kidding himself!* He is taking home a Fifth-Columnist whisperer that will steal away his heart unawares if he does not look out. "The sun is no worse for shining on the midden," but that is not true of human nature. The lie you think you reject with disgust will soak in bit by bit if you go on reading it.

The case of the cinema and of other amusements is more subtle, and therefore perhaps more dangerous. Broadly speaking, the cinema is non-political. "Our business is to amuse, not to instruct," is its cry. Hence the screen goes in for "romance." The background of 10,000 films is the heroine who emerges from heartache and pang to romance and happiness, to the accompaniment of Paris creations and ropes of pearls. The hero takes some hard knocks, but makes good, i.e. his pocket-book becomes fat, and folk begin to say, "Yes, sir." The cinema is accustomed to reflect a world where most ordinary people have the wherewithal for smart cars, and leisure for elaborate coiffures, even on desert islands. Work is an unimportant incident to be left to the supers. All this is not put on with an eye to its social bearing, of course. It "amuses," it is what the people like and will pay to see, and that is an end of the matter. However, the social bearing is there. Every such film is a sermon

preaching the values and attainments of millionaire-worship. It teaches one to view the world as our present possessors view it, and to dream their dreams. That it is propaganda by implication, propaganda ladled out unintentionally and sucked in unknowingly, means that it is the most persuasive propaganda of all. One cannot be on one's guard against it. What can be more admirable, one would think, than for a young fellow to be able to step out of the mean streets of his native town into a warm atmosphere, and spend Saturday evening in a comfortable chair holding hands, and so drift away into fairy-land? It is the quickest way out of Manchester. Our cities being what they are, devoid of light and colour, folk naturally flock to see this stuff. One cannot blame them. So it is that the multitude drinks in its weekly dose of delightfully "non-controversial" propaganda on behalf of the cannibal society. On the other hand, to answer this propaganda on the screen demands horrid conscience-pricking "outspoken" problem-plays. These are "controversial" and less entertaining. Most damning of all, they are often commercially unprofitable. Under the pressure of war you may get an occasional Socialist film (with the Socialism watered down) as a salute to our gallant Socialist ally, but normal business will see to it that men with "ideas" do not stick their nose in too far. Such is the natural and inevitable outcome of entertainment carried on as a business under the rules of Capitalism. This is how the bosses will most naturally provide innocuous occupation for the leisure hours of their wage-slaves. How much longer dare a democrat tolerate these saboteurs and quiet whisperers in our midst?

In the same way, the "Yes, sir" basis of society and industry can easily breed a race of "yes-men." So often the rule running down from director to manager, and from manager to foreman, is: "This is my job, and what I say goes. You can keep your advice until you are asked." The sturdy man rebels against this, at least inwardly, but the weaker character easily gets into the habit of looking to "them" to tell him what to do. This spirit is the blight of democracy. So many folk say: "I wonder what they will do about the Beveridge Report? Will they find jobs for all after the war?" A *democrat* would insist on asking the question: "What are *we* going to do about it?" Who are "they," these people who will grant us a new heaven and earth if they please, and for whom we have to wait? "They" are folk in London, people who write books and understand public affairs, official personages, the wealthy—anyone, in short, but *me*. The "they-complex" is certainly one of the grand causes of social

stagnation and political apathy. It does not occur to so many that they themselves ought to be up and doing. The "they-complex" is bred by the boss system in the people's daily work. Economic domination for forty-eight hours a week is bound to tend to ingrain the subservient mind. This is why we have in our midst so many tame and ignorant creatures who think that the safest thing to do is to vote for the man they think the boss will vote for.

Whichever way you look at it, political democracy ("one man, one vote") will not flourish unless nourished by economic democracy, i.e. by the people owning and managing the industry by which they live. The essential aim of the Socialist reconstruction of industry is to provide an environment which will encourage ordinary people to be real democrats. All the virtue is drained out of "one man, one vote" if the few enjoy a semi-monopoly of the means of persuading the people how to use that vote. Our fathers won for us political democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the Press, the universal franchise and secret ballot, etc. All this is a heritage beyond price, and one should beware of the man, however "Left" his opinions, who speaks slightingly of these things. Constitutional liberty is the first essential stage of democracy. A bold use of these liberties is our sole hope of attaining economic democracy without the horrors and perils of bloody revolution. Our fathers, then, gave us the tools. Let us finish the job! They started to make men free, and right nobly they laid the foundations. Unless we build upon them the work is wasted. Therefore we must go on to Socialism. All the means by which ideas are spread from mind to mind must be made *ours*. The whole people must run all the means of propaganda for the public good. Then to "one man, one vote" will be added, "one man, one voice." Only so can democracy become a living reality, and a whole nation of citizens arise.

Men of ill will will doubtless try to misrepresent all this as showing that Socialism involves a society saturated with all-pervasive State propaganda, from which no one can escape. This is a base calumny. The democratic Socialist certainly cherishes no ambition to silence all opinions but his own, nor is he obsessed with a passion for "improving" people in season and out of season. The Socialist Press will have room for the low-brow paper as well as the high-brow, for relaxation as well as for information. Socialist papers will not try to cold-shoulder cricket or cross-words or fashions because they are not "good for the State." All such interests are legitimate, and will be

duly catered for. The one thing that a Socialist administration would regard as of supreme importance would be to use every safeguard to make the political editor of a newspaper as impartial and independent as a judge. Editorship would be an office of public trust to be attained to by a life of honourable public service, not just a job by which one earns a living. Whether the political information in a given paper be detailed and serious, or merely rudimentary headline stuff, it would be unbiased, and free from tendentious rumours and distorting suppression. In the political comment due space would regularly be allotted for the expression of every reasonable opinion, and this in every paper, though it would still be possible to run newspapers which mainly inclined to one view or the other. It is clearly a part of consistent democratic Socialism to make it impossible for a Socialist never to see the Tory or Liberal side stated as well, and so for every opinion. The Socialist has nothing to fear in this free-for-all argument, for while the Conservatives may have more Oxford accents the Socialists certainly have most of the brains. This would be a truer freedom of the Press than the present freedom of the Press lords to shout down their opponents.

The same principle would hold with the Socialist-controlled cinema, and other forms of entertainment. We Socialists have not an itch to make everything "educational." It is legitimate to cater for the pleasant Saturday evening of relaxation. There will be room—abundant room—for the romance and the comedy as well as for the documentary. However, it should be a fixed principle in a great art that whenever a film reflects life it should reflect it as it is, and whenever it professes to reflect values it should conscientiously aim at reflecting true values. Box-office tyranny makes this impossible.

All who would enjoy government of the people by the people for the people must first attain to possession by the people of their own land, and of all the good things in it. There is no vital democracy without Socialist ownership.

XII

## I AM A FREEDOM-LOVER

*I AM A FREEDOM-LOVER. I must confess I am impressed by your economic arguments, but man does not live by bread alone. Socialism may bring about material prosperity and security, but I fear it will do so at too high a price. If all your Socialist plans come about, I will indeed be faced with a terrifying Colossus, for the long arm of the law, backed by irresistible economic pressure, will follow me everywhere. If my boss gets his knife into me now, there is at least the chance of changing my job. Under Socialism there will be no other employer than the State. If I annoy some official, or if I refuse to toe the line, I starve. Besides, Socialism will be red-tape run riot: if everything is planned by the State there will be a permit to obtain and a return to send in for every event between the cradle and the grave. I do not want to spend my life sheltering in a slit-trench from a barrage of O.H.M.S. forms in buff envelopes! We will put up with "controls," with coupons, points, and permits, just as long as war conditions make it necessary, and not a moment longer. I want to call my soul my own, Socialist prosperity or no prosperity.*

The old bogy to frighten you off Socialism always used to be that Socialism was impracticable and utopian idealism, something that would be very beautiful were all men perfect. This bogy is now losing its terrors. The example of Russia shows how practical and effective the Socialist State is. The millionaire, therefore, trembling lest his castle of cards collapse if the angry people blow too hard, must get a fresh bogy out of the bag. "Yes," he admits, "Socialist planning may be effective in increasing mass-produced wealth, but is it not something degrading to human dignity, that will rob him of his free manhood?" Socialism has been changed into a Mephistopheles who will give you the world in exchange for your soul! It seems that any stick is good enough to beat a dog.

The first slander we must dispose of is the common one that Socialism means coupons and points for ever and ever, and a rubber-stamped permit to breathe God's fresh air. To utility clothes, it is said, we wish to add "planned" utility houses, utility schools, utility newspapers, utility flicks, and breed a race

of utility men. Here will be an order of universal and studied uniformity, mediocrity, and drabness.

The plain fact is that what we have had to put up with in wartime is *not* Socialist planning. It is not even halfway from Capitalism to Socialism. It is the desperate attempt of bankrupt statesmen to breathe the generous and heroic spirit of Socialism into the dry bones of materialistic commercialism, for the sake of winning the war. An ancient tyrant would lash a corpse to his living victim, and let the two rot together. In like manner, in the wartime "controls" of capitalist economy we see the living spirit of Socialist planning lashed to the corpse of a dying order, and corrupted by it.

The wartime control of scarce commodities is a fence which always leaves the lush grass on the other side, and the hungry sheep on this. Hence the policeman has to be given the thankless task of seeing that the sheep do not get through the holes. Rationing, etc., has been a most necessary and praiseworthy attempt to prevent scramble, with the poor going hungry while the profiteer riots. This rationing is the attempt to keep in being the main structure of competitive enterprise, and at the same time to prevent it from acting according to the law of its own being. This is where the strain and petty annoyance comes from. After all, "profiteering" is only "enterprise" when the cupboard is bare, and rationing is the attempt to prevent private enterprise from being enterprising. Granted that most people would like a bit more, that they have money in pocket, but no coupons, what is more natural than for some to try to get a little from under the counter? "After all," they say, "the war effort will not suffer for my little bit, and I have got the money in my pocket." "*I have the money in my pocket, and therefore I have the right to what I want even though some go short*": that is the very lesson that has been diligently taught by word and example all these years by all the self-styled leaders of commerce and society. How can you expect everyone to forget that lesson in wartime, on the strength of a few patriotic broadcasts and pep-talks? It is not in human nature. Therefore our pre-war self-seeking society has seen to it that there are enough potential customers for the black market to give the criminal element their chance. It is because there is this easy money over the fence that the fence has to be watched. The annoyance of a thousand pettifogging restrictions, clamped on the good and bad citizen alike, is the price we have to pay for having gone into the war with the "everyman for himself" system still in being. A nation cannot go Socialist as an emergency war measure. To construct

a society that would not want a black market, and in which no one but the criminal element would dream of selling the public good for the sake of petty private convenience, is a task that cannot be accomplished by Order in Council by a Government that intends to go back to the old way as soon as possible. It presupposes the educative effect upon the people of a generation of public-spirited Socialist enterprise. "Let none have cake till all have bread" is a noble—indeed, a Socialist—ideal. What a task to enforce this rule in a community organized on selfishness as its Golden Rule! It is a tragedy that the reputation of State control should be damned in the eyes of the plain man because the State has been thus compelled to bend its energies to playing the part of a universal Paul Pry.

The economic control of which the Socialist speaks is a very different story. It is the peacetime control of *abundant commodities*. When there is "enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore," a controlled price, if fair, will be painlessly self-enforcing. No policeman will be needed to watch the queue of 99 persons for 100 turkeys in order to enforce a controlled price. When the greenest grass is always on this side of the fence, and the sheep's bellies are full, they will hardly notice that the fence is there. In a Socialist society there will certainly be strict control of the prices of the staple commodities, but it will be a self-enforcing controlled price that will need no quotas and coupons and permits. The plain man will not have the sense of being watched, for he will still feel free to spend all his money on whatever he most desires. To some all this may seem too good to be true. They may be surprised to learn that this is what has happened for years, with the difference that the controlled prices have been enforced by commerce to enrich sectional interests, and not for the public good. It may have passed unnoticed that a bottle of any brand of patent medicine has for years cost the same at whatever shop it is bought. This is not an accident. A ring of manufacturers have put their heads together to enforce controlled prices for their goods. They will only sell wholesale to retailers who keep to the list. There has been a controlled price, yet who ever paid a guinea for a box of black-market Beecham's Pills? The reason for this is simply that there has always been enough, and the price has seemed fairly reasonable. A customer has never been able to gain anything by paying more than the controlled price, so the retailer has never been tempted to charge more. Nor has the retailer been tempted to sell for less, for he would only reduce his own profit, and cut off his own supply into the bargain. This has

been happening for years with all manner of goods. Once there is an abundant supply, the regulating authority can fix a price at the top, and it enforces itself with a minimum of fuss all the way down. This is exactly what a Socialist Government will do. As part of its economic plan for the nation, it will fix controlled prices, but these controlled prices will be entirely painless. They will pass unnoticed by the man in the street. So much for the slander that Socialism means permanent rationing, and the everlasting reign of coupons and points.

A twin bogy to frighten the freedom-lover off Socialism is that of the tyranny of the universal employer. In the first place, we admit that no system of government can of itself, automatically and without effort, secure freedom. Any constitution can be perverted into a tyranny if base men are elected to power, and the multitude keeps on letting them get away with it. We are not, however, concerned with the theoretical possibility that if the whole nation were to go rotten the Socialist State might turn into a tyranny. We are practical statesmen considering what is the actual choice open to the people to-day. The choice is: the individual finds himself face to face with the mighty power of modern industrial and financial combines. To whom is he to entrust the control of these giant forces? To the benevolent (or otherwise) dictatorship of a small self-appointed clique, or to the jury of one's fellow citizens? The practical question only requires to be stated for it to be answered. Even under Socialism the price of freedom will still be eternal vigilance, but Socialist control is obviously the way for the individual to win freedom and human dignity.

We may learn a lesson from history on this point. There was a day when national defence was an industry entrusted to "private enterprise." The country was dotted with baronial castles filled with armed men. The feudal barons were nominally subject to the King, but in fact they were usually a law to themselves, and the land was filled with bloody anarchy. The Tudor monarchy introduced a firm central government, and reduced these "over-mighty subjects" to order. There were to be no more private armies. We cannot doubt that to the Conservatives of that day the dreadful Court of Star Chamber seemed pure tyranny. In many an ancient castle men muttered: "Where are our ancient liberties now, purchased by our forefathers' blood, and guaranteed in Magna Charta? So there are to be no more armed retainers! How then can a man keep up the estate of a gentleman?" Yet this "tyranny" was necessary if there was ever to be freedom for all, for freedom depends on law and

order. Centralized government did not bring liberty automatically. It needed a civil war, and a royal head on the block, and many a parliamentary tribulation, before we attained to constitutional government. Nevertheless, the destruction of the "liberties" of the feudal baronage was the prerequisite to the winning of liberty for all. To-day we have come to the point in economic affairs where the Tudors did in political. The curse of our time is "over-mighty subjects," a feudal baronage of millionaires embattled in mammoth corporations. Nominally they are subject to law and Parliament: actually they control law and Parliament by the power of financial squeeze. Naturally, to these gentry, so long accustomed to wield irresponsible power, Socialism spells pure tyranny. They prate about the virtues of rugged independence, and of the constitutional freedom that flourishes under the variety of competing employment which they provide, in much the same spirit as the pirates of the Spanish Main doubtless longed for the spacious freedom of the good old days before the Royal Navy cleaned them up. Nevertheless, the ruthless destruction of their "liberty" to rule us, and the setting up of a centralized economic government that is master in its own house, is the necessary prerequisite to liberty for us all.

It might well be, human nature being what it is, that in the Socialist society some official would wrong you. Perhaps he would not like your opinions, or your face, or your private morals, and you would feel he had got his knife into you. Well, the same thing can and does happen under the present system, only now you have to grin and bear it, or get out. However, if it is an official ultimately responsible to the public that has wronged you, and you are sure enough of the wrong, and feel deeply enough about it, you can set to work to make it hot for him. You can write to your M.P., seek the interest of local councillors, or even drag the matter up at the next election. Under Socialism the "village Hampden" will have at least a chance against petty tyranny, while now he has none if it comes from his employer, unless the law has been broken. In a Socialist society there will always be this appeal over the head of local officialdom to the feelings of the average fair-minded citizen. To entrust your destiny to the jury of your fellows in this way is a more secure and dignified freedom than to have to depend on the good graces of a self-appointed boss. So much for the slander that Socialism means: "toe the line or you starve."

Furthermore, even in the Socialist society the State would not

be the 100 per cent. employer. It would have its hand on all the large concerns, but a good many small ones would still remain. There is in this world the awkward customer who cannot abide an organization at any price, no matter how free and fair its discipline. This man will still be able to earn his undistinguished living in his own sweet way in a little business. Here is the moral justification for leaving room for small independent businesses within the main plan, with only a general and indirect measure of social control: they provide a needful safety-valve. This will be an additional safeguard of freedom.

You who rightly love human freedom have been duly warned! Beware of the man who would frighten you off Socialism because it means bondage to the State. The freedom he is *really* concerned about is the freedom of your boss to be your boss. He wants to secure your vote for your own servitude. Let all lovers of true freedom vote for Socialism, and the utter destruction of irresponsible economic power in the land.

XIII

## I AM A PATRIOT

*I AM A PATRIOT. You Socialists may think me sentimental, but I must confess that that which warms my heart above all things is no grand internationalist dream. It is private affection for this, "my own, my native land." I love every stick and stone of our village, every hill of our country, and every accent of our native dialect. When I see the glorious "Red, White and Blue" hanging in ancient tatters in our grand old Cathedral, I swell with pride at the memory of a great past, and of our fathers who dedicated themselves to the service of God and the King. On the other hand, when I argue with Socialists, I find myself struggling with a sense of disillusionment. If I were to open my heart to all your strange notions all my dreams would be shattered. You are so icily aware of blots upon our social system, and of infamous deeds done in the name of Britain in far-off lands. You are so lovingly aware of good customs flourishing in a hundred foreign countries. I am afraid that political theories have stolen away your heart. The things of which you speak may be true, but they are not the whole truth. Man cannot live and love and fling himself into high adventure at the bidding of your logic-chopping and nicely-calculated impartiality.*

We Socialists gladly admit that patriotism, the love of one's native land, is a noble and gracious sentiment. It is also a permanent element in normal human nature, and a factor to be reckoned with in human affairs. We deplore arrogant nationalism, but true patriotism is a very different thing. The patriot is the man who craves the welfare of his country. He wants to see her safe, and preserved from all calamity. He wants to see her honoured and loved, of good repute throughout the world. Let us take a look to see how these two things may best be sought in the circumstances of the modern world.

On the first score, it is plain that "the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and his Dominions," and likewise the sanctity of our hearths and homes, depend vitally upon a Socialist policy for Britain. When the present international mess is more or less cleared up there will be three Powers holding most of the guns, and the men to man them, the butter, and the bread to put it on. There will be Britain, and our two great allies, the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. Which of these two is likely to menace our future safety? Is America or Russia our potential enemy in the next war? Put plainly like this, the question seems indecent. It is like asking a man, as you sit down to cards with him, whether he intends to cheat. However, this is the question that the patriot has to answer. (It is also the question that most of those who shout loudest for maximum military preparedness in this country in the years after the war dare not answer—at least until after the General Election.) We can well imagine bad words over the fence with America over such issues as civil aviation, oil, shipping, and tariffs. Indeed, we have had some already! At the same time, we are kindred nations, with a secure tradition of non-warlike relations, and with civilian populations that cordially loathe those restrictions and inconveniences that are necessary to permanent military preparedness. Besides, capitalist democracy would hardly sanction the risk of war between Britain and America so long as a mighty Socialist power was there to hold the ring and profit by neutrality. Therefore we rightly state that war between ourselves and the U.S.A is "unthinkable." Friction is by no means unthinkable, but not shooting. This is one of the happiest facts of the whole international situation.

This leaves us with Russia as the only potential enemy in the foreseeable future. The anxious citizen will ask: "But what of the awful risk of Germany or Japan getting on their feet again if we do not watch them as a cat watches a mouse? Are they not proud nations, with a long tradition of military aggression? Will

they not be aflame for revenge? Is not the real danger here?" *No: it is not!* Modern war demands something more than the will to fight. It demands abundant resources. Both these countries will be left by the peace treaties with relatively slender internal natural resources. They will only be able to get up again if we help them to. This is just what we did during the years between the wars. American oil and British scrap-iron for Japan, loans for Germany, with supplies of copper and nickel and rubber from our Empire for the Nazis, meant not only profits for capitalist big business. Together with appeasement in Manchuria and Czecho-Slovakia, these things meant, and were *intended* to mean, bigger counter-weights to Communist Russia in the international scales. Unfortunately for the capitalists, Japan and Germany did not play the game. They rightly counted it easier to hit us first! If we behave during the next twenty years as if Russia were a Power by all means "to be kept in her proper place," we will do this again, and possibly with the same results. A future war might not see Russian bayonets in the opposite trenches, but it would nevertheless be war with Russia at second hand. It would be the outcome of mutual distrust between ourselves and the Soviet Union. The moral of all this is plain. If we can establish friendly relations with Russia, and work with her in close co-operation, then Britain will be safe from the calamity of war for as long in the future as we can foresee.

This is just the point where it is safest to let the Socialists try their hand at foreign affairs. War, either at first or at second hand, between Britain and Russia is by no means "unthinkable." Peace is not something that can largely be left to take care of itself in this sphere, as is the case with America. The Tory Party is packed with men to whom war with Russia is very "thinkable." Some of them may have thought again since 1941, but it is better to be on the safe side. The Tories are led by a man who went in for war with the infant Soviets at the end of the last conflict. They have lunatics in their midst who moved heaven and earth to get us into war with Russia as well as Germany in 1938, only Finland was a long way away and Sweden neutral. The Tories certainly try to preserve a discreet silence about these and other errors, and doubtless many have come to a better mind. At the same time, one has noticed very little avowed recantation from tragically mistaken policies of the past. Therefore it is obviously wiser to hand our national destinies to those who have always stood for all possible friendship with Russia, who have stood for it in good days and in

bad, in convenient and in inconvenient, i.e. the Socialists. Here are the men who can be trusted, if anyone can, to make a success of these all-important and possibly at times delicate relationships.

Of course, it takes two to make a friendship. Russia, like every other country, and like human beings generally, has two faces. The Soviets are a grand Socialist experiment, but the system also contains elements of dictatorship, the heritage of civil war. The only way to progress in Russia was to seize power by force, and so build the Socialist State, but the path back from such a seizure to full civil liberty is one bound to be beset with difficulties and uncertainties. We democratic Socialists do not pretend to like these elements of dictatorship, and welcome every sign of progress towards complete freedom of expression in Russia. The great and burning practical question for all in this country who would work for friendship with Russia is: "What can we do to stimulate every inclination in Russia to add complete political democracy to existing economic democracy, and to treat neighbouring smaller nations in a brotherly spirit?" Every advance along this path will increase the confidence we feel in making further gestures of trust and friendship. Certainly it takes two to make a friendship, and the Soviet Union must do her part too. We Socialists candidly admit that there are some things in present Russian policy which we regret, as in our own national policy. It is, however, our most vital single national interest that no stone be left unturned in the endeavour from our side to work for this friendship. The indispensable foundation of this national policy is surely the creation of a Socialist Britain. We must set up a system here like that of the Soviets, but in keeping with our national genius. We must set up an internal economy which makes co-operation with the Russian economy easy and natural. We must work in friendly agreement with Russia in helping to birth Socialist movements in other European countries, so that they may have régimes friendly alike to ourselves and to Russia. If anything will cement our wartime alliance into permanent and trustful friendship it is this policy.

Of course, there are risks involved in embarking the safety of our beloved native land upon friendship with Russia. We cannot be certain beforehand exactly how things will fall out, and there will certainly be a place for some years to come for a certain measure of British armed force, and for a firm as well as a manifestly friendly policy. At the same time, every conceivable policy demands an understanding with some other Power or Powers, and involves risk of some sort. We are as yet

unhappily far from a completely safe world. The risks of Tory policy are positively hair-raising! If we continue to tolerate Tory governments, they will go on trying to swim against the stream of the world's natural progress, and keep in being a defunct economic system. The natural underlying antipathy between British Capitalism and Russian Socialism will continue to provide the occasion for a thousand petty bickerings, which will effectually prevent the cement of alliance from setting. Each will give the other cause to feel that they are only friends until such time as it serves national interest for friendship to cease. Above all, a capitalist Britain is bound to go on desperately trying to bolster up non-Socialist régimes in as many countries of Europe as she can keep in her sphere of influence. This inevitably involves smiling upon a mixed breed of semi-fascists, in the tradition of Francoism, Darlanism, Badoglioism, etc. However polite we may be to the Soviet Union, this policy will inevitably seem to her, and will in fact be, a policy of combination to "keep Russia in her place." The natural response will be to stimulate every Soviet inclination to mark out her own sphere of influence in competition to ours, and to sovietize her neighbours by force. The outcome of this competition will inevitably be war. This war we would perhaps lose, and at best provide the fighting-ground in a war between Europe and America. The Tories may flaunt the Union Jack at their election meetings, but it is the Socialists who are the patriots who know what to do for the welfare of their native land.

However, the patriot is not only concerned to preserve his country from peril and calamity. He wants to show his love for her, and to vindicate her honour and fair repute, so that she may be loved by the world at large also. Hence the true patriot is keenly, even bitterly, aware of the blots upon his native land, and of any wrong that has been done in her name. Love is charitable, but love is also critical. A blemish in the character of a friend is an unfortunate thing that one passes over. A blemish in the character of one's loved one is a painful offence that one cannot forget. Love which respects and admires demands great things, and would have the loved one perfect. So the citizen who burns against the social and economic wrongs of Britain, and cannot bring himself to turn a blind eye to anything that is amiss, is the one who has proved himself to be the true patriot. Because he loves his country he would have her perfect. Because he has a high ideal for his native land, he sees the things that are wrong with her as hideous monstrosities, clean contrary to Nature. The self-satisfied individual who cannot see any great

need for improvement in our ways is not a patriot. He is merely an insensitive person, who has betrayed by his self-satisfaction what a low standard he has for his country. The same principle holds with our reputation abroad. That a Socialist insists on constantly raising painful issues regarding our government in India is not evidence that he lacks patriotism. He is not taking a perverted delight in fouling his own nest. The fact is, it deeply pains him that millions of Indians who have had contact with Britain should have come to hate the name of Britain. Whether the fault for this is ours, or theirs, or both, is not his chief concern. Rather is it that while there is yet time and opportunity we should do all those things that may ensure that the impartial verdict of future years shall vindicate our honour and our humane intentions. This is the highest patriotism. The man who says, "My country right or wrong," does not display fervent love of country. He shows thoughtless indifference to his country's reputation. So long as we have enough strength to bask undisturbed at home in the sun of our own self-righteousness he does not care whether we have any rightful claim to respect or no. We candidly admit that Socialists are more aware than other men of the wrongs that Britons have done to Britons, and to non-Britons, but this is not due to lack of patriotism. It is the outcome of their patriotism.

In the same way, if a true lover of his native land goes abroad, and there finds some new custom or idea that is good, he naturally covets that his own beloved land be adorned with it. Awareness of what may be learned from other lands, and preparedness to learn it, is not the evidence of a lack of patriotism. The father who truly loves his child does not keep him at home, so that he may only learn what is to be learned there. He gives him the best schooling he may, so that he can learn as many good things from as many good men as possible. So is it in the relation of a patriot to his country. Colonel Blimp travels abroad, and every land he visits adds another to the list of the races he despises. This man is not a patriot, however! Listen to him on his return: he curses everyone from the Prime Minister down to the boots at the hotel. Everything is wrong! Experience shows that the man who can look with affectionate recollection upon Paris and Vienna will look with greater affection upon his native town, though that very affection will make him hate its slums. On the other hand, the man who looks with jaundiced eye on foreign parts and foreign men will look with jaundiced eye upon his neighbours.

Do you, as a patriot, fear that Socialist doctrine will shatter

your dreams, outrage your private affections, and betray your native land into unknown perils? Such fears are quite unfounded. Socialism is that which will make your dreams come true, and preserve that which you love in safety. To vote Socialist is the true service of country.

## XIV

## I AM A WAR VICTIM

*I AM A WAR VICTIM. The dirty Boche has put out the light of our life. I had a fine upstanding son, a good lad to his mother, and with fine prospects. He has just come back from hospital with half his face blown away. He may work again at some sort of job, for he has grit, but as long as he lives those who meet him will find it hard not to turn away from him with horror. What a choice for his girl: to take him on like that, or to kick him when he is down! I can never, never forget that it was a German shell that did that. The lad's mother is a gentle spirit. She can still say: "I dare say that the man that fired that shell did it because he was told to. I dare say he has a mother too, and perhaps she feels as I do by now. It is all too terrible to think of." I cannot bring myself to think like that. I will never sleep in my bed at night until I know that these swine have smarted for what they have done. I know I speak for millions in this land, and even more, for untold millions who have faced the terrors of German occupation. I hate the Germans, and you cannot expect me to forgive them. You cannot expect the French, and the Czechs, and the Poles, and the Russians, and all the rest, to forgive them. Human nature demands vengeance. I say, leave them only their eyes to weep with. That is the only way to teach these unspeakable bullies a lesson. Now, our Tory M.P. is a hard man, who is in politics for what he can get. He will not do much for the working man and his wife unless driven to it, but there is one thing about him I like. He is an outspoken man. He is not afraid to say he* hates *the Germans. He hates them* all. *He hates, and will not forgive this time. If he gets back to Parliament, he will vote for rubbing Germany in the mud, for giving all her people a taste of terror and starvation. Therefore I will vote for him. It is a case of first things first. Social reform is all very well, but it can wait. As for our bright young Socialist candidate, there is one thing that sticks in my throat. He is a well-meaning man, no doubt, full of fine plans for a better Britain, but he will keep prating about getting hold of the good Germans, and making it possible for them to build a better Germany. Certainly it would be a good thing to encourage such folk, if*

*only I could believe that there are enough of them in Germany to count, but I dare not trust the future of our country to that policy. Sentimental talk like this reflects a very dangerous lunatic frame of mind, that will go all weepy about the terrible sufferings of innocent blue-eyed German children when the French seize the Rhineland, and the Poles East Prussia, and that will spend the next twenty years flinging insults at our allies for their "brutality." This will encourage the Germans to try again. No: I hate the Germans, and when I say the Germans I mean the general mass of the whole German nation. Socialists are not sound on this issue, and I will not trust them.*

All who have suffered in the war, or who have seen their loved ones suffer, must first face a simple question. Who is the *proved*, the *consistent*, enemy of Nazi brutality? The "tough" Tory is really the waverer! The so-called "sentimental Socialist" is the man who really *does* hate the foul thing that has put out the light of your life. You must not let yourself be blinded to this vital fact by the circumstance that, as well as punishing the war criminals, the Socialist does avow his intention of doing what he can to help the better type of German to take the lead in a disarmed Germany, in the hope of gradually building up a democratic, peaceful, and happy Germany. This other side of our policy towards post-war Germany is only common sense. We Socialists are absolutely adamant on the necessity of the severest punishment of war criminals of all nations, but we do not want a Germany seething with hatred and disorder for ever, a permanent abscess festering in the body of Europe. That way means constant alarms, and permanent conscription to maintain the army of occupation. However much you may hate the Germans, and with however good reason, it is at least sensible to see what can be done to avoid your grandsons and great-grandsons having to spend their best years policing Germany!

You will remember how your Tory M.P. started his career. He made his money in the last war. Then he was swept into Parliament on the strength of the battle-cry, "Hang the Kaiser, and make Germany pay!" *He soon forgot!* There was interest to be earned by loans to Germany, and he saw to it that the loans were made. So much for making Germany pay! That part of the programme soon went the way of the hanging of the Kaiser. The fellow is talking now just as he was then. How can you be *sure* that he will not soon forget *again*? As years went by the news came trickling through of the rising power of a gang of thugs

led by one Adolf Hitler, an obscure Austrian ruffian. "They seem an unsavoury lot of guttersnipe," thought your M.P. to himself. "Thank God British political life has more gentlemanly standards! However, there is one thing to be said for Hitler and Co.: they do mean to be a rod for the back of the Bolshies. That is all to the good." Later events proved that your Tory M.P. was able to learn by experience. The day came when Hitler wangled his way into power over a distraught people, and with Teutonic thoroughness began beating up everyone who would not shout for him. Now Hitler and his gang were no longer scum. They were the saviours of their country. Evidently to the Tory mind nothing succeeds like success! Your legislator heard grisly stories about what was going on in the concentration camps, and likewise reports of Jewish schoolgirls forced to sit by themselves with yellow hair-ribbons, and of the teacher being compelled to insult them before the class. These, he felt, were most regrettable excesses. Perhaps, however, they were only the growing-pains of a new order. Hitler had certainly restored the self-respect of the German nation, despite his deplorable manners. One could only hope that these crudities would be outgrown in time, and the new "vigour" and "discipline" remain. Your M.P. did not perhaps go so far as to say in public that a touch of Hitlerism would do the British working-classes good, but we do not know his private thoughts. He certainly felt that even if democracy be the more civilized form of government, dictatorship is the more efficient. Besides, a mighty German army was an insurance against the ambitions of the obscene monster of Bolshevism, albeit a rather dangerous insurance. Another consoling thought was that, despite the growing international tension, business was looking up. Things cannot be so bad if that is happening! Your Tory M.P. had some shares in the British Battleships Corporation, and these paid their first dividend for years. This was partly because, at long last, the British Government had woken up, and was attending to our defences. It was also partly because the Corporation had a holding in Krupps—not in the armament plant, of course; the British money was in Krupps' civilian production—at least, he *thought* it was, though he had to admit to himself that he had not asked too many questions. "It is an economic truth," he reflected, "that prosperity in one nation makes for prosperity in another. We are indeed members one of another."

What was your Socialist candidate doing all this time? He was a fiery young man, accustomed to spend his Saturday evenings tub-thumping in the Market Place, denouncing Hitler

and all his works in terms of stinging abuse, and trying to awake his hearers to the fact that unless the nations stood firmly together to resist Hitler the world would be plunged into war. Then he passed round the hat to collect funds for the rescue of Hitler's refugee victims. The local M.P. cursed and fumed: "Sheer irresponsibility, I call it: sucking up every alarmist report concerning Hitler's doings, and every bit of sly Communist propaganda, and then flinging insults at our powerful neighbours. Besides, why should we fill the country with foreign riff-raff, as if we had not enough unemployed of our own? The fellow ought to be in prison!" A not unreasonable argument on the face of it, perhaps; but who was the enemy of your enemy?

Events moved to Munich, and at length Mr. Chamberlain flew home from Hitler with "Peace with honour," "Peace in our time." How your M.P. cheered and waved his order paper in the Commons! "Hard on the Czechs, no doubt, but you cannot expect a great Power like Germany to stomach defiance by a rabble of minor States. Hitler is quite right when he says that there must be order in Europe, though I wish his methods were less harsh. Besides, though I certainly do not want war anywhere, things rather look as though there may be one. Let us arm, so that we do not appear a tempting victim; let us allow Hitler to expand if he wants to, so long as he expands to the East; let us make it plain that we have no friendly aid for Russia, if she finds herself in a pickle—then if most regrettably there is a war, perhaps it will be a war between Russia and Germany. Our enemies will then consume one another, while we grow rich selling them munitions. This would indeed be a very happy providence." So your M.P. walked down the road of appeasement. Meanwhile, the man who solicits your vote in the name of Socialism saw what was coming, and enrolled as an air raid warden.

In light of recent history, who can claim to be the consistent and thorough-going enemy of the thing you hate? The one Tory slander that really gets our goat is this: "Well, Britain certainly lacked a clear foreign policy before the war. We were all to blame in one way or another, and so we stumbled into war." We indeed! The effrontery of it! We Socialists do not relish standing by the ruins of blitzed homes and the corpses of babies to say, "I told you so"—*but we did!* A thousand speeches from the acknowledged leaders of British Socialism prove it. When the Tory leaders of this country, fortified by their rubber-stamp Parliament of men like your precious M.P., were indulging in the midsummer madness of dinner parties to

Ribbentrop (paid for out of the profits of British nickel and rubber sold to the German war machine), we Socialists saw what was happening, and said so. If the people of this country ever forget that, they have forfeited all moral right to honour and freedom.

Those who have suffered, or who have seen their loved ones suffer, and those who are rightly grieved for countless victims in many lands, should certainly put their trust in Socialist policy. The Socialist is the consistent enemy of Nazi cruelty and violence, the one who burns against it not only when it hurts him, but also when it hurts anyone. The Socialist is the enemy of this foul thing when there are profits to be made out of trade with it, as well as when it is damaging to our own interests. Therefore you know where you are with the Socialist. You can trust that he will see to the punishment of the big men in the racket as well as the small fry. At the same time, he is committed to the difficult attempt to make the punishment not mere indiscriminate vengeance, which will fill the world with more bitterness, but, rather, justly-proportioned retribution which will be for the lasting vindication of justice. By contrast, experience shows that the Tory is a weathercock, swinging in every breeze. If he thinks that £ *s. d.* and the votes of the unthinking are to be gained by oiling up to the tyrant, and selling our friends to them, we have seen he will do it. If a few years later he finds that more £ *s. d.* and further ignorant votes are to be collected by cursing all Germans without discrimination, we see him just as happy to do this. The Tory is either on his knees to the Nazi, or else he is at the German's throat. He is moved by expediency, by prejudice and passion. The Socialist is moved by principle. Many Tories have, no doubt, repented of their appeasement days, and are sincere in their resolve to do better. We Socialists do not damn them without further trial. However, if some doubtful customer straight out of gaol comes and says he is sorry, and means to go straight, you do not immediately appoint him treasurer of your club. You give him a chance to prove himself, and welcome him in friendship, but the treasurership goes to the man who has always gone straight, the man you can trust. Do you long with an unspeakable longing to have the world cleansed of the vermin that have defiled it? The Socialist is the man you can trust.

## XV

# I AM AN IDEALIST

*I AM AN IDEALIST. I believe that the things a man has in his mind count for more in the end than the things he has in his pocket. Men may come and go, and nations likewise, and whole civilizations, but truth and beauty and goodness last on. These are the real things, and the best plan of life is to live as if they were, even though they may not bring one wealth and ease. Most folk may not seem to care much for ideals, but I think they get their eyes opened in the end: at least, this seems the best assumption to work on. It is better to be decent and unselfish, in hope of bringing the best out of folk, than to go the other way, and damn every man unless you know anything to the contrary. Why should a chap like myself vote Socialist?*

That is an easy one! You have already stated the heart and soul of Socialism. You have gone behind all the various and changing details of Socialist plans to the great and fixed principle of the thing itself. It has been well said that the difference between "Right" and "Left" in politics is that the "Right" is pessimistic about human nature, while the "Left" is optimistic. Deep down in his heart the Tory feels that, apart from the élite (of which he is presumably one), the human race is a bunch of poor, spineless customers, if not of downright rotters. This is why he is so loud in his praise of "our noble institutions." Anything good in the world as we know it is by way of being a miracle of grace, considering what creatures men are. It is something to be preserved with anxious care, lest it perish in the rude world. Here also is the reason why the Tory, the man of the "Right," is so complacent in face of the manifest abuses of our present system. These things are only what is to be expected, men being what they are. Hence the Tory hankers after "leadership" by a superior class. He cannot imagine that ordinary people are other than idle, shiftless, and unimaginative. Left to themselves, they are sure to bungle things. That is why it is just that the self-appointed "leaders" should be rewarded with vast wealth and power. These men are utterly indispensable, because the common herd is so utterly incompetent. Roughly speaking, this is the state of feeling that underlies most Toryism.

By contrast, the Socialist is optimistic about human nature.

He thinks of men, *all* men, ordinary men, as creatures of dignity, worthy of respect. Whatever is good in our present institutions is to be accepted with gratitude, and preserved with loving care, but even at their best present institutions do but paltry justice to the claims of humanity. The wrongs of the times cannot be tolerated as part of Nature. They are a monstrosity to be hidden quickly out of sight. The man of the "Left" is sceptical about the lofty claims of the self-styled "leaders" of society and industry. His contact with ordinary men teaches him that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. There are multitudes who could be "leaders." Men of ability in leadership are not born few and expensive, and reared in the public schools. They are artificially made few by cruel and cramping lack of generous opportunity.

If one looks out on the world from the top of a high tower of judicial impartiality, a case can be made for both these views. Few are so good as to have no serious besetting fault. Human imperfection is everywhere. At the same time, ordinary people in the mass are decent, well-intentioned, and with rich possibilities. Fix one's eyes on all the regrettable facts, and the sordid Tory view of life can be upheld. Conversely, the Socialist is in danger of fixing his eyes only on the happy facts of life, and of becoming Utopian, over-sanguine in his hopes. However, the practical man of affairs is not altogether concerned with this academic judgment on the world of men. His question is: "What attitude to men and their problems will yield the best results in promoting the happiness and true welfare of my fellows?" The answer is surely that one should be a realist, and take serious account of what is amiss with the world, but yet incline to the hopeful side. The appeal should always be to the best in men, in hope of bringing out the best. To appeal to the worst is to court failure. Speak to men as though you expected them to be citizens of integrity and responsibility, not as feckless sluts, then *some* of them *may* be. Always set about reform as though you expected great good to come speedily: then some real good may come. The golden rule is: "Do not be a Utopian dreamer, but incline to the hopeful side," i.e. incline to the "Left." Be a Socialist. The generous and idealist Socialist attitude to men and affairs is more effective as well as more moral than the cynical and disillusioned one characteristic of Toryism.

The capitalist view of society is fundamentally a materialistic one. Its ultimate sanction is brute force. The argument used by the Tory to defend his sordid system of organized competitive selfishness is this: he does not claim that this is a perfect system,

or even a moral and humane system. He does claim that it is the only system that will actually make men work. He feels that few men can be trusted to stick to any job for long unless they are rewarded by that which makes them comfortable in body or envied by their neighbours. Industrial "discipline" can only be enforced by the lash; by the fear of getting the sack, and finding that one's wife and family face starvation. The only way to keep a business agent "on his toes" is to fill his heart with the fear that unless he can "put a fast one" over the other chap he will have it done to him. The basis of capitalism is that the only practicable way to appeal to ordinary men is through the belly. If they will not play according to these rules, one resorts to open force. Gaol them as thieves or shoot them as rebels. This is the "morally invigorating environment of free enterprise," the system that makes a man of a man, and teaches him to stand on his own feet.

The strange thing is that experience shows that human nature does not work like this. The capitalist system of rewards and punishments may just suffice for the more humdrum tasks of life, but when something exacting or difficult is to be done it utterly breaks down. So in the war effort "the rate for the job, plus bonus" has worked after a fashion for routine production. However, if there is some job of special urgency, special care, or special secrecy, even the capitalist boss has to break with all his habits and make the appeal of practical idealism: "Your country depends on you; your son depends on you; your boy at the front depends on you." Even more, when the job to be done is not making munitions, but risking one's life to use them, the money appeal is not even tried. The very notion is laughable! The talk in the training camp is not: "So much for every Jerry killed. We'll make it worth your while!" Rather is it of "discipline," "keenness," "honour of your regiment," "your pals depend on you," etc. And what is the reward for some heroic deed? Not the wherewithal to buy your wife a fur coat that will make her envied by the neighbour's wife, but a bit of ribbon to mark you out as a man to be honoured for the service he has done. This is the *effective* appeal of practical idealism. It goes down, not only with picked units of ardent volunteers, but also with the rank and file of decent men who do their bit because they have been called up.

The appeal to the belly can go so far. The appeal to the heart and mind goes all the way. Socialism is simply the attempt to organize the whole human family on the latter principle. "State planning" is only a means to an end. The end is the foundation

of the comradely society, where all men can feel that the rule is not scramble for self, but public service. A man must live, of course. Human nature being what it is, a man works best if he is getting what he feels are fair wages. The Socialist society will certainly see to all this. However, its avowed intention is to make the *dominant* appeal to every worker, and to every citizen: "In your job you serve the public. The nation belongs to you, and to your pals. They all depend on you, as you depend on them." The supreme honour of the Socialist society will not be two Rolls Royces, and a house ten times as big as one needs. It will be *honour*: to be looked up to. It will be responsibility: the opportunity to exercise wider influence. This appeal will do more to make men work than all the "nicely-calculated less or more" of society as organized by the millionaires. Furthermore, the whole organization of commerce and industry will be an education in public spirit and citizenship, instead of an education in the reverse, as at present. The lesson will be lost on some, no doubt. We do not suppose that to change the system will automatically make all men good and wise. It will, however, powerfully and progressively work in that direction. You are a practical idealist? Then, of course, you are a Socialist!

## XVI

## I AM A CHRISTIAN

*I AM A CHRISTIAN. Fundamentally, I am very sympathetic to many of the things you Socialists stand for, but I am bound to confess that your view of life seems to me to be too superficial, and too optimistic. In the Christian Gospel I believe I have a way of life far more profound and satisfying than Socialism, as well as far more realistic in its estimate of the cost of setting up a new and better order of society. As I see it, the Christian Faith is: (i) In Jesus Christ is made known once and for all that which man needs to know about God, and about the moral nature and moral needs of man. In Christ God the Son united Himself with human nature, and so God Himself lived a real human life in this world. Here is the world's last word on religion and morals. (ii) in Jesus Christ God faced all the moral and social difficulties and perplexities of men and women. He faced them in our conditions, and went even to the limit of a cruel death, the object of misunderstanding and undeserved shame. In every experience He lived a sinless, i.e. a perfectly victorious, life. The supreme pledge of this, God's victory over sin and wrong in the world,*

*is the fact that Christ rose from the dead. Because of all this I know that God loves me; I know that He calls me, and all men, to a life of purity, justice, and brotherly love; and I know that only the power of His victory can enable me, or any man, to rise above my lower self and live in that way. In God's love and power, made known in Jesus Christ, is my trust.*

*Naturally, Socialism appeals to me. It too speaks of calling all men to a life of brotherly love, and of justice. Compared with my Faith, however, I find Socialism wanting on two scores. Hence I cannot give myself heart and soul to your cause, much as I would like to. (i) If Socialism is true, it is at most a policy adapted to a particular and passing emergency in the history of the race. Your creed is barely a century old. In another century, social conditions may have so changed that all the issues which so excite you now will then be dusty history. How poor and superficial is Socialism compared to the Gospel! Here is something that has been lived by under Cæsar, and the barbarian invasions, and the feudal system. It has seen the rise of nationalism, and of capitalism, and will see the end of them, and of Socialism likewise. (ii) You Socialists are far too optimistic about human nature. You forget that men often perversely rebel against what they know to be good, and that even the best of men are not strong enough to do all the good they know. The weakness of human nature will drag down your admirable schemes of reform. This is because you have left out God. He is the only One able to make your dreams come true.*

In answer we Socialists say: We respect your religious convictions, and some of us share them passionately. However, in your comparison you are confusing the respective scope of religion and of politics. You are condemning Socialism because it is a system of political thought and action, and not a *religion*, which it does not pretend to be. The doubts and hesitations aroused by this confusion are a calamity to the cause of human progress. Here in Christianity is a great mass of human goodwill, and of aspiration after social and international justice and brotherhood, which ought to find its natural channel of practical activity through Socialist politics. All too often these aspirations remain aspirations, and come to no practical effect, because Christians cannot or will not see what practical politics is demanded by their ideals and religious principles. This wastage of the raw material of good statesmanship is a tragedy of the first magnitude.

It is correct that religion and philosophy deal with the universal things that are always true, while politics is concerned

with passing issues. However, unless we are to be impractical dreamers, we have to set ourselves to the arduous task of applying those eternal principles as best we may to the actual affairs of our daily lives. This may be in some ways a less sublime task, but it is every bit as important a task. From the point of view of politics, it does not greatly matter exactly *how* or *why* you became convinced that certain ideals of human life and behaviour are good and true. This is, indeed, a very important matter, but it is the concern of religion and philosophy. In the political struggle, the *one thing that matters* is that you *do* actually hold these ideals. If you do hold them, you ought to want to join with everyone else who does, for whatever reason does not vitally matter, in the attempt to put them into practice in the affairs of common life. It is quite obvious that the ideals implicit in the Christian Faith, when so applied in practice, do involve Socialism. "From every man according to his ability, to every man according to his need" is the very spirit that breathes in the teaching of Jesus. The attempt to build a society that expresses that spirit, and that inculcates it into the hearts of its citizens, has surely a good claim to be called Christian politics. By contrast, the competitive institutions of commerce and industry as organized by Capitalism involve a society which is based on the material rather than the spiritual, upon force rather than goodwill, and which serves as an education in selfishness to the citizen. From the Christian point of view, such a society is frankly immoral. It is the world organized according to the law of Satan.

It may indeed be that the Roman slave hiding in the Catacombs found joy in the presence of God as he worshipped, and comfort in the hope of heaven hereafter. His faith brought him peace amidst woe, and moral strength to face the dire temptations of his miserable lot. The same was doubtless true of early monks seeking refuge from the fury of the Northmen, of the feudal serf cringing at his lord's castle gate, of the negroes as they crooned their spirituals on the plantations, and of our grandfathers as they came home from the dark satanic mill and got ready to go to the prayer-meeting. Christian faith is not dependent upon any social system.

> "*The mind is its own place, and in itself*
> *Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.*"

"Therefore," runs the muddle-headed argument for shameful political apathy, "the Christian ought not to lay too much store

upon any scheme to improve social conditions." The damning error of this is in the "therefore." Of course it has been a good thing that this varied multitude of miserable sufferers has had a ray of light shed upon its miseries, but this does not explain away the fact that the wicked social systems which have caused this misery have been utterly condemned by Christian ethics, and have placed a thousand stumbling-blocks in the path of him who would walk the Christian way. For every one that has triumphed and stood erect there have been a dozen sadly warped, and a hundred completely crushed. So to-day it is possible to be a Christian amidst the barbarities of ruthless Capitalist competition. It is possible to be pure even when engulfed in its sordid commercialism. It is possible, but infinitely difficult. Therefore the Christian must burn against the iniquitous system that surrounds him. He has absolutely no excuse for neglecting his practical duty in this age by fixing his mind exclusively upon that which is true in every age.

Under the second heading, we Socialists know that you Christians claim that by the power of God's victory in Jesus Christ men can be made into new men. Their power to see and pursue that which is good and true and just can be increased, and this, when they cannot do it for themselves. If this claim be true, and it is indeed possible for religion to increase the amount of practical idealism distributed up and down the world, then you have a very important and practical secret. We well know that the main reason why reform tarries is that there is not a sufficient supply of really heroic idealists. If the Christian can increase the supply it is up to him to do it, and we wish him well. Some of us Socialists believe this claim, and would share this task. However, this is not the concern of politics. The business of the statesman is to mobilize such idealism as there is, so as to bring it to the maximum of practical effect. That we could wish there were more is certainly not an excuse for neglecting to use what there is! Still less is the Christian claim that the quantity of human raw material for a better society can be increased an excuse for the lamentable political apathy of some Christians. Not all Socialists have religious convictions, of course, but it is wicked to sabotage the efforts of Socialists to mobilize human ideals to practical effect by condemning them for "building without God." In the eyes of the religious man, such measure of human idealism as we find in our midst is nothing other than the gift of God to the world. God has provided this raw material for the statesman to use. To neglect to do so is surely a sin against God.

The notion put about by a certain type of ultra-gloomy religious person, that human nature as we have it in the mass simply will not stand for a great improvement in the social order, and that the world of men is something to be despaired of, is a base libel against the race. All ordinary men have weaknesses and besetting failings, but it is perfectly obvious that the ordinary man moves at a higher level of decency than does the social and economic system that surrounds him. Men are organized by the bosses into cannibal nations and cannibal industrial units, but they are not a race of cannibals! Thus most ordinary people of practically every race passionately want to stop at home in peace. To get them to fight they have to be made to feel they fight in the sacred cause of self-defence. Yet a world in which most people want peace is filled with war! Clearly it is the system that is mainly to blame, not the men. That is why the Socialist is justified in hoping for great things if only the bosses and exploiters can be pushed off, and a more rational international order founded. The same thing is true of the economic order. Get on the right side of the man in the street, and he will probably take real satisfaction in the knowledge that a good job well done is for the good of his fellows. However, he is compelled to work under a system which consistently gets on the wrong side of him, which at every turn makes it as hard as possible for him to be generous to his pal. Certainly we Socialists are right in our burning conviction that a re-ordering of the economic order can quickly lead to a great raising of the level of public spirit and civic virtue. We are not such fools as to suppose that this re-ordering can of itself produce a *perfect* world, in which all men are good and wise.

Nothing is more lamentable than when one hears upright and well-meaning men sanctimoniously saying: "Our calling as Christians is to celebrate Sacraments, and to hold prayer-meetings, and to get men 'converted,' and then all the problems of the world will come right of themselves." *They will not!* Idealism needs to be turned into practical idealism by practical instruction and practical organization. If religious people go on to say, as sometimes they do, "Politics is a worldly affair; indeed, a dirty business. We, the servants of God, must not soil our hands with it," then *that* religion is indeed "the opium of the people." It deserves to be liquidated! There is nothing of this sort of religion in the Bible. Certainly a Christian ought to be the most active and persevering of Socialists.

XVII

## I AM A COUNTRY-LOVER

*I AM A COUNTRY-LOVER, and with good reason. I live in one of the most beautiful villages in the county. Folk come from far and near to drive through the Park. No one fails to admire the old thatched cottages with their perfect mullioned windows. Our village is indeed a piece of England's green and pleasant land. Now candidly, do you think it became beautiful by accident? When you see a comely and unspoiled village, and a trim and well-wooded stretch of countryside, you can take it from me, it is so because it was made so, and has been kept so. This is what the old race of landlords did. They knew no jargon about "planning," but that is what they lived for. A good landlord planted the woods and the avenues, and saw to it that no cottages were built in the village that did not match. On occasion houses were even pulled down, so as to improve the view. A good landlord would tolerate no cottager who did not keep his garden trim, and the effect is to be seen even to-day. Now, when I go home I see a hideous clutter of blue and yellow enamel signs shrieking at me from the petrol filling-station on the main road. The way in which they came to be there is simple. When the old Squire died his son had no ready money to pay death-duties on the estate. He had to sell some frontage down on the road. This was bought by some low individual who had made his money in the sausage business. He built himself a foul red-brick bungalow, but this was not the worst. He will sell again to Tom, Dick, and Harry: and so we got the garage as well! This has been going on all over the country. The leprous rash of pink bungaloid growth that spreads in ribbons from every town, and along the coast, and to the vantage-point of every fine view, is the symptom of the decay of the old proprietors who took a pride in the land. The old owners looked upon the country as a home, the new look upon it as an investment. You Socialists propose to complete the ruin, and then you have the insolence to talk glibly about "planning" and the preservation of rural amenities! All you do in fact is to spoil such planning as there is.*

First, the Socialist is entitled to make it clear that these troubles are not due to Socialism. Most of the ruin has gone on during the years between the wars, i.e. under Tory-dominated governments. It is your Squire's friends who have done the damage. Past governments have considered that their economic policy ought to be confined to holding the ring for a slogging-match between economic interests, and the agricultural interest

has not been able to stand the racket. Thus the old estates have gone downhill, and any ignorant person with money in his pocket has been able to acquire the right to do as he pleases with the fair face of our native land. Please do not call this Socialism.

Those who are rightly anxious for the care of the countryside, and who fear what will happen in the future, can be assured that Socialist policy is the only thing that will put a stop to further spoliation. Even more certainly, it is the only thing that will ever provide the energy and means to tidy up the mess that the old order has left. We Socialists do not believe that it is morally right, or in the long run good for the people, that the social amenities of a district should be dependent upon the graces of a privileged family, no matter how responsible they show themselves in exercising their privileges. This was, we admit, the only possible way at one time, but that day has gone for ever. We do not regret the downfall of the old landed families, and the passing of the old system of social patronage and petty tyranny for which they stood. At the same time, we admit that gratitude is due to this class for having "planned" rural Britain in the past. The practical question now is: "Who is to take on this great responsibility, seeing that these old 'planners' no longer have either the financial power or the moral right to continue?"

It is plain that no government working under capitalist institutions can do more than tinker with the problem, however good its intentions. According to the rules of capitalist society, "property is property." I do what I will with my own. A property-owner cannot be prevented from putting hard cash into his pocket by pulling down a fine old Georgian house to make way for a cinema, or by "developing" his road frontage or coastline. Therefore, under capitalism the public cannot plan their towns, preserve ancient monuments, provide green belts and access to mountains, or keep open the coastline, without paying through the nose for each item. In each case there are protracted compensation negotiations with tenacious vested interests, followed by forking out blackmail. Each bit of Britain beautified means an agitation by a handful of public-spirited individuals, who cannot be everywhere at once. For all its high-sounding new legislation the old system can only produce the bad old result. Only Socialism can cut through the tangle by purchasing all the land (to be followed, of course, by an ordered and gradual redistribution of the national wealth). Then, and only then, can a planning committee *really plan*, and know that its word

will "go." When we get this it will be up to country-lovers to get on to the committees, and see that the job is done with taste and discretion. Tory government inevitably means that every increase of commerce involves pulling down the old and beautiful to make room for "ye olde" and meretricious; every extra family that can happily afford a car will lead to more ill-considered litter of "Pull in here" and "Car park, 6*d*.," and the growing rightful desire of the people to live within sight of a green tree will ensure that ere long no grand aspect will remain grand. Only Socialism can provide the mechanism whereby the people can go to live or play in the country without turning it into a rural slum. Socialist planning is the charter of the country-lover.

## XVIII

## I AM A RETIRED PERSON

*I AM A RETIRED PERSON. I speak for those whose main life-work is done. We are the folk who live on our modest savings, our pensions, or the bit of money or property left to widow or elderly spinster. We are not comfortable "capitalists," but folk who have lived useful lives, and now seek a little peace and quiet. Our difficulty about Socialism is that it seems to mean constantly-increasing wages, and constantly-increasing prices to pay the wages. This is all very well for people who are still earning, but for us it means slow ruin. We have to buy what we want out of a fixed income. The retired worker must have security. Do you wonder that as a class we are suspicious of Socialism?*

We Socialists agree that the great need of retired people is security. One of the chief aims of Socialism is indeed to provide economic security and peace of mind for all, and particularly for those unable to fend for themselves in the battle of life. In the first place, you can take it that when comprehensive and generous Socialist social security schemes are first set up the benefit will extend not only to those who are still working, and who can pay contributions for a time, but also to such retired people as could justly be regarded as "hard cases" were they excluded. However, this does not quite cover the case of the "retired person," i.e. the person who has always regarded it as natural that he should make his own *private* provision for retire-

ment, and who has been fortunate enough to be able to do so on a modest scale by insurance, annuities, pension rights, or a little property. At the advent of Socialism there would be this numerous class, consisting neither of wealthy capitalists whose fortunes ought to be reduced, nor of folk who would be "hard cases" were they denied State benefit. We admit that in its first decades a Socialist society would have to take account of elderly people who have lived their lives and formed their plans under the rules of the old order, and whose wish it is to live the rest of their lives on their independent means. It is not in accordance with the laws of human nature that these should suddenly and gladly step into "the brave new world" as though they were bright young things.

We Socialists give you the following assurances. We ask you to take them seriously, because you form a class of the community traditionally regarded as "fair game" for Tory scares. A Socialist government is not going to buy up every little scrap of property merely for the sake of doing it. It is the big estates and industrial holdings that bring social and political power to the wealthy that we are after. Our aim is not to reduce everything to uniformity, but to ensure that there is no power remaining in the State able to sabotage the plans of the elected government. Therefore our Socialist planning may quite possibly not affect your personal interests at all. Furthermore, if in planning the country we have to take over any of your landed property or shares, these will be purchased at a fair price, not merely stolen. No responsible section of Socialist opinion advocates expropriation without compensation, though the Tories constantly go on repeating the foul slander that we do. Socialist redistribution of the national income will not mean crushing direct taxation upon small "unearned incomes" such as yours. It is true that the estates of the few and wealthy (consisting in the early years of Socialism of the blocks of securities handed over to the millionaires as compensation), will be gradually reduced to modest proportions by taxation and death duties. Your contribution to the Exchequer, on the other hand, will continue to be proportionate to your modest means, as in the past. Thus you will be no worse off after this strange and terrible revolution! You will hardly know it has happened.

What you will discover is that you will enjoy a new security in what remains to you. Remember, the process of raising wages, and then raising prices to catch up with wages, i.e. slow inflation, is not *Socialist* finance. The devaluation of the currency has been gradually happening for centuries, and under capitalist

control. It is indeed the standard way for capitalist finance to run away from the difficulties of its own making. In time of labour scarcity, e.g. during war, the capitalist boss keeps industrial peace by offering better wages to the workers, hoping later to turn this into a bogus increase by raising prices on account of increased costs. So in the dim past a labourer worked for 1*d.* a day, then for 1*s.*, and now it climbs up to 10*s.* The other side to the picture is that your ancestor may have been "passing rich on forty pounds a year," but his descendants on that fixed income would not be very fat to-day! Thus under capitalism the "little man" who must be careful with his savings, and who therefore puts it into trustee stock, finds after a few years that the system has partially bilked. The money that was lent to fight Napoleon had lost half its real value by the time we had beaten the Kaiser. The money that was lent to fight the Kaiser will have lost half its real value by the time we have beaten Hitler: and "the higher it goes the faster." On the other hand, the "big man," who can face "industrial risks," finds that his property increases in value to keep pace with the increased circulation of money. At election times the Tory candidate talks very earnestly about "financial stability" and "economy." He is most solicitous for your welfare, and is zealous to rescue the poor widow from the clutches of rapacious Socialism. Look into the matter, however, and the "security" his system offers you is a very sorry affair! He offers to give your life-savings the security of a casino. Granny is given the chance that her cottage may increase in value by being bought to provide the site for a smart shop, but in return she has to take the chance of its being condemned. One man's little packet of shares goes up, and another's down. Only the holder of "gilt-edged" can be *sure* of the future. He may read the past, and be sure that his holding will slowly depreciate.

Under Socialism, such "nest-egg" as the economic system permits a citizen to retain will keep its value for ever. A Socialist government would at first increase the wages of the workers, but this would not increase industrial costs and the price of goods. The extra money would come from the distribution of a portion of what was removed from the millionaires. Thereafter, as the industrial system was improved, and the productive power of the nation increased, wages would proportionately be raised so that there would always be enough money to buy the increased supply of goods. Prices would not in general increase. Thus there would be a gradual improvement in the standard of living for those still earning, but without deteriorating the

living of the retired person. Certainly you, the retired person of modest means, have nothing to fear personally in the coming of Socialism. Pluck up your courage, and vote for the policy that will give a better world for generations yet unborn.

## XIX

## I AM A PRACTICAL MAN

*I AM A PRACTICAL MAN. I admit that you Socialists can argue well. You can beat the Tories at spinning words, but man does not live by theories alone. I pride myself on being a common-sense, practical sort of fellow, who is mainly interested in whether things work. I can find room for politics only in so far as politics help to make life liveable—and I am yet to be convinced that they do. Some of my pals get very excited at election time, but I prefer backing the local football team as a hobby. I get just as much fun with fewer tempers lost. Why should I bother to vote Socialist?*

Supposing one had to choose between a system that was very wrong and stupid, but which had the virtue that it worked, and another which was altogether good and wise, but entirely impracticable: what then? Much as we love our ideals, we Socialists might be tempted to agree that in a difficult and perplexed world it was best to choose the way that worked. However, the finally damning thing about the present rotten system is not so much that it is unjust, or cruel, or degrading to humanity, though it is all these things. It is this: *the capitalist system does not work.* This is the meaning of the present universal and long-continued mess. In former periods of history capitalism ousted the previous system because it worked better in the conditions of the times. Times have now changed. Modern capitalism fails to deliver the goods. It is easy for wits to score debating points, and to pick holes in Socialist arguments, but it is impossible to imagine Socialist planners, however "starry-eyed," professorial, or doctrinaire, surpassing the "business men" in sheer large-scale and disastrous bungling.

For example, some men on government work spend half an hour spitting on their hands and making tea. The "business man" is horrified: "Gross extravagance! Public money going down the sink! My word, if only I had those chaps in my works! And you Socialists would have State enterprise everywhere:

you would have *this* everywhere!" At this point the "business man" becomes incoherent and speechless. He forgets that his "business man's government" had *millions* of men spitting in their hands (or not even this, for they were not even thinking of starting a job), and they went on not for half an hour, but for *years*! Yet all around were slums uncleared, land undrained, bellies unfilled, backs uncovered. It never struck him at the time that this was the most colossal national inefficiency imaginable, the most astronomically stupendous waste of national resources. The only waste he saw then was the dole, which at least kept the unemployed sufficiently alive to be able to help in the war effort when war returned. The race of those hypocrites who "strain out the gnat and swallow the camel" is not yet extinct!

So one may go on through an infinite gradation of smaller, though still enormous, examples of the practical inefficiency and muddle-headedness of capitalist governments. Farming is up against it. We must therefore pay a subsidy to encourage the sugar-beet crop, and keep thousands of farm workers slopping about in November mud so that Britain may enjoy the privilege of expensive home-grown sugar instead of cheap Jamaican. The result is a glut in Jamaica. After a few years we have to provide a new subsidy to rehabilitate our distressed Colonies. The government takes great credit for its humanity and Empire-mindedness. Locomotives are fired with coffee in one continent, while doubtless research chemists are at work in another trying to extract coffee-substitute from coal. O business efficiency, what bloomers are committed in thy name!

You practical man of affairs: Why not copy the "effete," the "ineffective," the "wasteful" Union of *Socialist* Soviet Republics? Why not give Socialism a chance *here*?

## XX

## I AM A CITIZEN

*I AM A CITIZEN of this great nation. Under whatever heads men and women may be classified, I speak for them all. Whatever their walk of life or state of mind, they are all citizens. Why should a citizen vote Socialist?*

The fundamental duty of a citizen is to be public-spirited. Tory policy means running the country mainly for the benefit

of a few. Socialist policy means running the country for the benefit of all. Therefore a Socialist vote is a public-spirited vote.

Notice, we do not say the Tory is a *man* lacking in public spirit. That would be the attitude of a bigot, and such a statement would be plainly belied by experience. What we do say is: Toryism is a *policy* lacking in public spirit. This is a very different matter. There are two main types of Tory. First of all there is the hard-faced man who says: "I have a comfortable stake in the country. No d—— Socialist shall take it from me! If I am hit, I am well able to hit back, and I am not ashamed to hit below the belt." We can at least credit this man with honesty. He has no illusions about himself, and he says what he thinks. We Socialists know where we are with this man. There is nothing for it but to work and work until we can vote him down. Then if he will not obey the government, we can lock him up. The obscurity and confusion arise from the presence on the stage of another figure, and a more common figure. This is the man who is obviously full of the milk of human kindness, a most well-meaning individual whose political life is clearly inspired by the best of intentions, who is yet a zealous Conservative. How is it that so many public-spirited men can be found adhering to policies utterly lacking in public spirit?

The answer is that the opinions of the better type of Conservative are like the small buttons that the tailor sews to one's coat cuff. They are the vestigial remains of something which was once useful. The underlying principle of honest and decent Conservatism is inertia, the hanging on in the twentieth century to opinions that might have had much to say for themselves in the nineteenth. There was a day when it could be argued that it was in the best interests of the whole nation that the country should be run by men of privilege and property. The argument was never a *noble* one, yet one can easily see how some would find it a *common-sense* argument. A hundred years ago the masses were ignorant, uneducated, and inexperienced in politics. Landed property was then in the hands of the class that was born to rule. No one in his senses would ever have claimed that all the squires were good, but it was at least arguable that it was better on balance to trust them with government than to hand affairs over to the village people. Furthermore, at that time industry mainly consisted of a multitude of small firms, which were largely in the hands of owner-managers who had "worked their way up." The most friendly observer would have had to admit that some of these industrialists were cynical and grasping, but an impartial mind might quite reasonably have formed the

judgment that this class contained the enterprise of the nation, the men of brains and responsibility and "punch." It was therefore not unreasonable that wealth should share power with birth.

How does our genial, gentlemanly type of Conservative justify his politics to-day? He goes on repeating what was true, or at least a part of the truth, in his grandfather's day. His basic assumption is that the capitalist owners of industry roughly represent the energy and brains of the country. He is blind to the fact that actually they are only the grandsons of the men who in their own day represented the brains and energy—a very different matter! He then backs up this assumption with the argument: "Lord —— comes of a fine old family with a grand tradition of public service. They have represented this constituency for three hundred years, and our folk have always voted for them. I will vote for them still, because our destiny is safe in their hands." The Tory repeats as if it were true now what was perhaps true in his great-great-great-great-grandfather's day, i.e. that the county families can be trusted to look after "their" people in much the same way as an intelligent dairy-farmer can be trusted to care for his cows. This ignores the circumstance that the landed aristocracy and squirearchy have either become part and parcel with the rapacious owners of industry or else have gone downhill, and are impotent to fulfil the obligations they have inherited.

Hence the modern Conservative is bound to be a Jekyll and Hyde. The public-spirited Conservative continues to be a Conservative because he can persuade himself of the truth of a damning lie, on the ground that once it was a partial truth. There are an infinite variety of reasons for this intellectual fog, pride that will not admit the time has come to confess to a mistake, old-fashioned prejudice and sentiment about "the good old days," irrational fear of change and the unknown. Therefore the public-spirited Conservative continues his perverse and destructive alliance with the hard-faced men, or rather, the latter drive the former before them as the Germans drove women and children as a protective human screen before their advance. Always with the Tory Party, "the hand is the hand of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob." The genial and gentlemanly voice and smile is very charming, but so long as you vote for the Tory candidate the hard-faced man will keep his hand in your pocket. We do not challenge the sincerity of the multitude of well-meaning individuals who form the Tory bosses' human screen. That they are sincere is the very thing that makes them useful to the millionaires who pull the strings. That they

are sincere and well-meaning also gives the Socialist hope as he strives to awaken all men to action in the day of testing crisis. Now is the day when the foundations of Socialism must be laid if we are not all presently to perish. Now is the day when the foundations of Socialism can be laid. Now is the day when all men must free themselves, not only from the shackles that have been forged upon them, but also from the shackles they have forged upon themselves. Do not be content only to be public-spirited. See that you read the signs of the times, and translate your public spirit into a vote for the public-spirited policy. A citizen will vote for Socialism. Only a willing slave will vote again for the slowly dying cause of an outworn order which perishes before our eyes, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

THE END

**NOW HAND ON**

**THIS BOOK**

**TO YOUR FRIEND WHO**

**"STILL HAS HIS DOUBTS"**

SEE HOW MANY HEADINGS YOU COME UNDER.

EACH IS A REASON FOR VOTING SOCIALIST.

JUST THE BOOK TO GIVE TO A FRIEND WHO "STILL HAS HIS DOUBTS."